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Woman's Weekly

05 December 2017

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Woman's Weekly
TESTED BY US
So It Works
For You

BOOST YOUR ENERGY!

7 Simple Solutions

MIRIAM
MARGOLYES
'Why I'm Helping
Out At Age UK
This Christmas'

**Glam Up In
Style With Our
Fashion Tricks**

DISCOVER DOWN-UNDER

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Christmas
Crochet!



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Hello!



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Cherished Memories

We just love receiving the photos you send in for our You Wore It Well feature on page 7. This week's photo of reader Beryl, taken in 1942, reminds me so much of my own mum, Rene, from 1928 (below). Memories are so important, aren't they, whether they're from a photo, a piece of music or even a perfume? On page 20, we're introducing you to new scents that are similar to all-time classics. Remember Aqua Manda and Charlie? Just thinking about them takes me straight back to schooldays...

As we get closer to Christmas, you'll find so many wonderful ideas and stories inside this issue to make it memorable – I hope we inspire you.

Jayne

Jayne Marsden,
Lifestyle Content Director

Every Picture Tells A Story

I remember my mum telling me how my nan had made this dress especially for her to wear in this portrait. I think she wore it well, don't you?



New For You

Fancy updating your perfume to one that's like your favourite? Turn to page 20 to see Acting Beauty Director Sarah's round-up.

COVER PHOTOS: ALAMY, REX



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Welcome To Woman's

A Cup Of Tea With

Pete Waterman

❖ Record producer and songwriter Pete Waterman OBE, 70, has written and produced many hits, including Kylie Minogue's *I Should Be So Lucky*. He's single and has homes in Cheshire and London.

How do you take your tea?

Proper builder's tea, true to my working-class roots. Milk, but no sugar. I prefer Yorkshire Tea.

Who would you most like to have a cup of tea with?

I'm fanatical about history. I read and watch everything I can if there's a historical element, so I'd love to have a cup of tea with Winston Churchill. He's the one person who'd know the truth of everything that went on in the war years and beyond.

You turned 70 this year, what's the best thing about getting older?

It's not your joints creaking, that's for certain. The weirdest

thing is, in my head I still think I'm 18! The nicest thing is having 65 years of memories. Some things you remember and have a good laugh about, others you cry at. But having that wealth of memory is wonderful.

It's 30 years since you wrote *I Should Be So Lucky*. Do you consider yourself a lucky man?

Ooh, without question! Somebody up there loves me. I look back at where I started,

I mean, I had a fantastic childhood with great parents, but we didn't have a penny. My dad worked on the railways earning less than £20 a week. There were times

my mum struggled to put a meal on the table. But look at my life! It's been amazing. I've had tragedies, of course – I lost one of my sons and I've been divorced three times. Overall though, I've been very, very lucky.

Are you planning on retiring soon?

No! To be honest, nobody works harder than me. People say 'workaholic' like it's a disease. But I love it. Mind you, I'm not as driven as my pal Simon Cowell. He doesn't have what I have, like interests outside of work – he's totally focused.

What's the worst job you've ever done?

I did all sorts of things before I got into the music business and without a doubt being a gravedigger was the worst. Me and shovels don't get on! I was 17, in between jobs and thought my mum wouldn't be happy if I wasn't working, so I took the job. I lasted about five minutes! My mum said, 'I don't know why you took that in the first place.' So I probably should have spoken to her beforehand.

As a lifelong railway enthusiast, is there any journey in particular you'd love to take?

Yes, I'd love to go on the train from Coventry to Rhyl like I did with my parents when I was one in 1947. I don't remember that journey, but there must have been something that sparked the all-time passion I've had.

❖ *The Hit Factory Ultimate Collection box set & download is available at juno.co.uk.*



Look What I Made

❖ Have you made something? Well, don't be shy - we want to see it!



Those magical (and magically funny) moments when someone says something memorable

After a biology lesson on how blood gets around our bodies, my eight-year-old granddaughter Hayley wrote about it in her school book: 'The body contains Vanes, Hearteries and Caterpillars, which all carry blood to and from the heart.' Much to the teacher's amusement, I'm sure!

**Carole Casan,
Tiverton, Devon**

❖ Thanks for sharing your story.

We love hearing about your favourite family moments, so keep them coming!



I was delighted when I opened a recent issue of WW (12 September) to see that it featured a Scottie dog embroidery pattern. My mother embroidered a pillowcase using the original pattern in 1937 and lent it to a friend who couldn't embroider but wanted to enter an embroidery competition! It won first prize. All these years later it's now framed and hangs on my bedroom wall. It was lovely to see it featured once again.

Joan Mold,
North Yorkshire

de
gorgeous?
see it!

Letter Of The Week

£25

I cannot thank you enough for your article offering 10 steps towards a healthier heart (26 September). My partner had a heart attack not long ago and he has to watch his health now very closely. But I had been eating very



unhealthily. Being a full-time carer for my 94-year-old mother, I put myself last. I finally got my cholesterol checked and it was 9! After your article I decided to look after myself – I ate porridge for breakfast every morning, (as opposed to nothing!) and had my five-a-day (as opposed to two!). I also started eating yogurt and walking for at least 15 minutes every day. Within one week my cholesterol went down to 7 and I feel and look much better. Thank you, not only for making me feel and look younger and healthier, but also potentially saving our lives.

Catherine Hiscox, Hemel Hempstead, Herts

❖ Thank you for telling us your story, Catherine. **We love to hear from you, so do get in touch if you have something to say**



PAWS FOR THOUGHT

This is my grandson's Maltapoo, Nala, all tucked up for a good night's sleep.

J P Ainsworth, Staffordshire

❖ Got a pet pic that makes you smile?
We can give it a good home

Where I Read Mine

I recently went on holiday to Bulgaria with my son and daughter. Here I am catching up on some reading at the Bulgarian/Turkish border in Rezovo.
Gladys Barber, Hampshire

❖ We'd love to see where you read your copy of *Woman's Weekly*.
The more exotic, the better!



This Is The Week To...

Visit ✓

Winnie-the-Pooh: Exploring a Classic

Experience the timeless and universal appeal of this much-loved bear and learn about the creative partnership of author AA Milne and illustrator EH Shepard. The exhibition, at the V&A in London, includes sketches, letters, photographs, ceramics and fashion. From 9 December to April 2018, with support from the Unwin Charitable Trust.

✦ **Tickets £8. Visit vam.ac.uk/exhibitions/winnie-the-pooh-exploring-a-classic**



Book ✓

Hamilton

This groundbreaking, award-winning musical tells the story of American founding father Alexander Hamilton through hip-hop – and now it's come to the UK, at London's Victoria Palace Theatre.

✦ **From 6 December; hamiltonthemusical.co.uk**

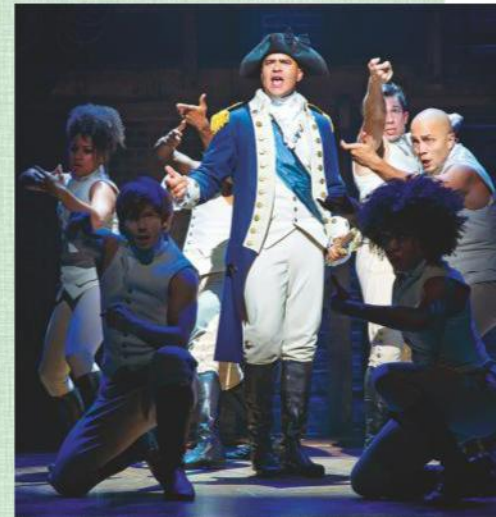


Explore ✓

Worcester Christmas Fayre

Until 3 December, the streets of Worcester will be filled with the colours, sounds and smells of Christmas. In keeping with the Victorian theme, stallholders wear traditional 19th-century dress.

✦ **visitworcestershire.org**



Mini Make

Pine Cone Birdies

Apply a blob of hot glue to the top flat part of a pine cone and press a polystyrene ball in place. Bend a small piece of pipe cleaner into a beak shape and glue on. Using the image as a guide, bend a piece of florist wire into a zig-zag shape to form one foot. Leave a few cm for the leg, then wrap the wire tightly around the cone. Form a second foot and leg in the same way. Bend the wire until the pine cone bird stands. Use metallic and glitter spray paint to coat the bird and allow to dry. Cut wings and a tail from glittery card and hot-glue on. Make the eyes by glueing on beads or sequins, or drawing them on with a black marker pen.



Wicked Wit

'Before you marry a person, you should first make them use a computer with slow Internet to see who they really are.'

Will Ferrell, actor

Lovely Thing

One of the best things about winter is the warmth of a log fire, and this fragrance will bring that feeling to your home. With hints of cedarwood kindled with whispers of nutmeg and warm amber, this scent will make you want to cosy up with your family.

All large candles cost £23.99 and are available at yankeecandle.co.uk; 0808 196 9524. Candles come in a range of sizes.



GET IN TOUCH



We love letters

Woman's Weekly,
161 Marsh Wall, London E14 9AP
PS. It really helps when you put your details in capitals

We do not return photos (apart from 'You Wore It Well') so please do not send originals

Email us

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What You're Wearing



▶ Claudia Giessen, 51

Tell us about your look...

Well I'm pretty much head to toe in River Island! I love shopping there as it's so stylish and they have such a fantastic selection. My check coat is my most recent purchase. I like a monochrome look as it's so easy to mix and match. My boots are from the USA.

And the best bit of your body?

My hair and my lips.



▲ Pamela Walter, 70

Tell us about your look...

It's quite classic with a modern touch. My trench coat, top and trainers are from M&S and my trousers are a great cut and from a local boutique in Devon. I love good accessories. I've had my leather bag for years and this chunky bracelet always looks good.

And the best bit of your body?

My small waist.



◀ Tamara Raphael, 36

Tell us about your look...

I've always been a colourful dresser. I spend half my time in jeans and the other in dresses. I don't do much in between. I also like leather trousers for going out in the evening. Everything I'm wearing today is several years old! I love independent boutiques, but you can't beat Zara and Uniqlo.

And the best bit of your body?

My back.



You Wore It Well

Beryl Demaine (née Armstrong), 1942

This is me photographed on my third birthday. My mum made my outfit - it was leaf-green with a beige fur trim.

We'd love to see how great you looked - in any era up to and including the 1980s. Please send a good-quality photo with your name, address and daytime phone number clearly written on the back, to: Fashion Dept, Woman's Weekly, 161 Marsh Wall, London E14 9AP. Photos will be returned.

YOUR WEEK

What your stars have in store with astrologer **Barbara Goldsmith**



Aries 21 Mar - 20 Apr

This is a great week for concentrating your energy on a particular task. Set a clear intention and you'll accomplish what you want.

Taurus 21 Apr - 21 May

Release all expectations, especially in your relationships. If you can remain flexible, interactions will be easier.

Gemini 22 May - 21 Jun

The Full Moon in your sign is encouraging you to focus on you: do something that makes you feel good.

Cancer 22 Jun - 23 Jul

Your creative juices are cooking up a storm. Think about what you love and take at least one action towards it.

Leo 24 Jul - 23 Aug

If a work situation doesn't work out as you hoped, pursue other options. You will find a way, so don't give up.

Virgo 24 Aug - 23 Sept

Changes in the home are indicated in the planets. You may be planning a move, or maybe just a facelift.

Libra 24 Sept - 23 Oct

Don't focus on what isn't happening; set your sights on what you want and then allow the universe to deliver it.

Scorpio (24 Oct - 22 Nov)

Gratitude is your keyword this week. To see a transformation in finances, start taking note of everything in your life that you appreciate.

Sagittarius 23 Nov - 21 Dec

Sometimes you sidestep the truth in trying to be nice. Stop doing that as it's not serving you.

Capricorn 22 Dec - 20 Jan

You're in the process of restructuring parts of your life. Don't overwhelm yourself with too many goals.

Aquarius 21 Jan - 19 Feb

Romance is in the air. Smell the flowers, listen to the birds and tune into the buzz around you.

Pisces 20 Feb - 20 Mar

It's a good week to put energy into time management. Make sure you're doing what is most important to you.

✦ youastrologysigns.com

WORDS: LUCY TURNER. PHOTOS: NEIL MACKENZIE MATTHEWS. PHOTOGRAPHED AT BLUEWATER SHOPPING CENTRE, KENT

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'I Love Saying Things To Shock People It's Such Fun!'



In an age when celebrities tend to be careful about what they say, famously outspoken actress **Miriam Margolyes** can be something of a surprise

Screen legend Miriam Margolyes is known for her witty asides and honest views on life. When we call her for a chat, she's warm, wry and on form. 'I occasionally say something in order to shock because it's such fun!' She reveals. 'But mostly I say things because I believe in what I say and I want to say it.'

Miriam, 76, is starring in *The Man who Invented Christmas*, a film about how Charles

Dickens wrote *A Christmas Carol*. After reading English at Newnham College, Cambridge, this is a dream for 'proud bookworm' Miriam.

'It's very good to read,' Miriam says. 'It's the sign of education and sophistication and I'm very sorry for people who don't read. When I go into a house and there are no books, I'm afraid I make judgments.'

Though she's starring in a film about *A Christmas Carol*,

Miriam reveals that she's stuck on deciding her favourite Dickens novel. 'It's between *Little Dorrit*, *Bleak House* and *Great Expectations*. Every time I come back to Dickens, I always think that he's better than anybody else. I hope this film will make people want to read his books – if you read Dickens you feel alive. It makes you feel everything.'

Downton Abbey's Dan Stevens plays Charles Dickens

played Matthew Crawley, referring to it as a 'rather inferior soap opera.'

'I hated it, It was pretending to be a social document and it wasn't. I mean all the people in it were my friends – but I just thought it was so nakedly formula. It wasn't genuine for me, so I didn't watch it,' Miriam says.

Though she's starring in the most Christmassy of films, Christmas Day isn't a big deal with Miriam. 'Being Jewish, Christmas had no religious significance for me,' she explains. 'so I don't celebrate it. I do disapprove of the amount of money that people spend on presents that they can't afford, for people they don't like and I'm not interested in the sentimental twaddle that people talk about. I think if they want to be nice to people then they should be nice to them all year round.'

However, while Miriam might take a dim view of the modern-day commercialisation of Christmas, she definitely does connect with its deeper spirit of goodwill. This year

'I hope this film will make you want to read his books – if you read Dickens you feel alive'



Miriam plays Mrs Fisk and Dan Stevens (right) is Dickens in *The Man who Invented Christmas*



Harry Potter films, but does she ever tire of talking about it?

'It was a lovely job!' She says. 'I loved the people and I enjoyed it. It wasn't fun and it wasn't a laugh – it was a rather serious business trying to get it right. It's brought me a lot of money and happiness and I'm very grateful to it. Do I think that JK Rowling is as great as Dickens? No I don't. But I think she's a bloody good writer.'

Chatting to us on the phone from the house she shares in Tuscany with her partner, Heather, a retired Australian university professor, Miriam, once breaks conversation to let her partner know that she's already fed the cat. Next year, Miriam reveals that she's looking forward to celebrating their 50th anniversary.

'I don't like parties,' she says. 'But we'll have one. Next year is our golden 'something' – though we didn't get married. I was lucky to choose a perfect person. I think that sometimes life is sweeter shared. But only if you find the right



Professors Sprout (Miriam) and McGonagall (Dame Maggie Smith)

'Harry Potter wasn't fun and it wasn't a laugh – it was rather a serious business to get it right'

she'll be helping out at Age UK Lambeth, who are holding a Christmas lunch for elderly people in her London borough.

'Christmas is a time when people who are alone feel more alone than ever. Because of that, I'm going to be helping out at a party for the elderly. It means I spend some time with people who otherwise might be quite lonely.'

Miriam's well known for her role as Professor Sprout in the

person – there's no good being with somebody who makes you unhappy.'

As Miriam wishes us a warm goodbye, we get the feeling that this is a lady who will never stop being excited about life – and wanting to learn more.

'Never stop reading,' she advises. 'Books will delight you and inform all parts of your life.'

❖ *The Man who Invented Christmas* is in cinemas from **1 December**

Time To Get Talking This Christmas

Caroline Billington is on a mission to get us all chatting to each other – especially at the most festive time of year. Here, she speaks to Sue Thomas about how she’s changing lives

As Caroline Billington drove a minibus full of elderly people to a festive lunch, she couldn’t help but pick up on the awkward silence.

However, it wasn’t that these people were strangers.

They were neighbours and lived just yards from each other in the same block of flats.

Yet, despite their close living quarters, none of them knew each other or had even had a conversation.

It was 2007 and Caroline had volunteered to drive a minibus of elderly people to a locally organised Christmas Day lunch in Newbury.

‘On the way there, nobody spoke, we just travelled in silence,’ Caroline says.

‘It was so strange, as these people were neighbours. But on the way back, I noticed a

‘On the way back from the lunch, they were chatting non-stop’

stark change. They were chatting non-stop and arranging to meet for coffee.

‘They spoke about what a lovely time they’d had and how happy they were that they’d met each other.’

Caroline was so surprised at how a single lunch had brought everyone out of their shells.

It had given the group the chance to connect, talk and build budding friendships. And it was that moment

that gave Caroline an idea that changed her life.

‘Rather than leave the good deed done, I started setting up a charity called Community Christmas,’ Caroline says.

‘I just had the urge to connect people. So I built a charity that offers support to anyone wanting to start a new Christmas Day event, with advice on how to gather volunteers for cooking, serving food and transporting people there and home again.’

And so the website, communitychristmas.org.uk, was born, listing places people can go on Christmas Day.

Over the next few years, the organisation continued to

grow, bringing elderly people together at 74 events across the country in 2013 and 152 in 2014. By 2015, it had risen to more than 300 events.

It was, and still remains, Caroline’s mission to unite elderly people at Christmas so that nobody has to spend the festivities alone.

But the 56-year-old didn’t want to stop there.

She wanted to connect people of all ages.



‘I thought that those who are new to an area, women who’ve just had a baby or people who don’t get out much might welcome the chance to meet someone and chat over a cuppa,’ Caroline explains.

So in July 2016, she decided to launch Coffee Companions (coffeecompanions.co.uk), which encourages cafes to host regular coffee mornings, where people can meet and chat.

‘It was a hit and was really lovely to see people connecting over a coffee,’ Caroline recalls. ‘Participants can even download a “Chat mat” from the website, which can be left on the table as an indicator that they’re happy to natter. It just helps to eliminate any awkwardness.’

‘At one session, one regular dug out a poem to share called

Warning: When I Am An Old Woman I Shall Wear Purple.

‘The following week, someone else from the group came along dressed head to toe in purple! It was a great icebreaker.’

So where did this passion for connecting people come from? Has Caroline, perhaps, felt isolated in her own life?

Quite the opposite, in fact.

mas



Caroline, third from right, set up Coffee Companions to help prevent people from feeling lonely



Caroline has an impressive and varied work history that has been very fulfilling.

She's been a speech therapist, an accountant and a finance director over the course of her working life.

'I live with my partner of 11 years and we don't have children - we never wanted them,' Caroline explains.



'I swim first thing every morning when I can, and try to learn one new thing every year.

'This year, because my handwriting is appalling, I went on a calligraphy course, but I lost patience with it. However, I took up the trombone 15 years ago and still enjoy playing.'

Busy Caroline has also tried skateboarding, painting and volunteering at a local theatre.

And she continues to drive the local community minibus a few evenings a month.

'I'm not ready to stop yet,' Caroline says. 'I love bringing people together and helping them make new friends.'

Is trying to connect the world too big of a job for just one woman, though?

'Maybe,' Caroline admits. 'But even if I can only make a difference to a few people's lives, it's worth all the effort.'

Other Ways To Get Connected

The 'Frazzled Cafe'

M&S has joined forces with comedian Ruby Wax to launch fortnightly after-hours 'talk-in' sessions in selected stores. Under the banner Frazzled Cafe, people who are feeling 'frazzled' can meet to talk and share personal stories in a safe, non-judgemental and supportive environment.

The meetings are designed, not just for the one-in-four Britons suffering from mental-health illnesses, but for the four-in-four who are feeling harried and overwhelmed by the stresses of modern life.

❖ For more info, check out frazzledcafe.org



Men's Sheds

Men's Sheds supports mature men who want to get together to socialise. They can meet new friends, while making and mending items, sharing skills and learning new ones, all in the welcoming space of a 'shed' - or any form of workshop.

❖ To find out more, go to menssheds.org.uk



The hearing aid that lets you *connect* to every sound

In today's busy world, we all know a bit about multitasking. Trying to do several things at once isn't always easy – but for Phonak's new hearing aid Audeo B-Direct, it is! Not only does this clever little piece of technology promise to give you amazing hearing wherever you are, its Bluetooth® technology connects effortlessly to almost all Bluetooth®-enabled mobile phones and your TV too!*



*actual size

Great hearing wherever you are

Noisy environments like a pub, a restaurant, or a family gathering are made so much harder if you've got a hearing loss. You might struggle to join in with conversations and end up feeling left out. But Audeo B-Direct's amazing technology has lots of features to make it easy again – like AutoSense OS, a unique feature that automatically detects your surroundings and makes tiny adjustments every 0.4 seconds, so you can be sure you won't miss a moment! Plus, extra features are tailored specifically to give you better hearing in the car, when you're out and about on a windy day, or when you're listening to music.

"Turn the TV down!"

If you're one of the 4.4 million people in the UK with an untreated hearing loss, you probably hear these words a lot. Maybe you feel like you need the volume loud because dialogue sounds mumbled or you can't quite hear it over background music – but it's too loud for everyone else!

But Audeo B-Direct changes all that. It's more than a hearing aid: it works as wireless headphones too! Thanks to a simple multimedia hub called the TV Connector,* you can sit back and enjoy your favourite TV programmes, films and music with effortless, crystal-clear sound straight into your ears, making it easy to watch TV with loved ones again.

"Sorry I missed your call..."

Sound familiar? Maybe you don't answer the phone because you know it's too difficult, or you don't hear it ringing at all! But the amazing technology in Audeo B-Direct means that you won't struggle with phone calls any more. Thanks to Phonak's amazing technology, Audeo B-Direct pairs easily with nearly any Bluetooth® phone – no smartphone required! This means you can answer calls through your hearing aid with your phone up to five metres away across the room, in your pocket or even in your bag! The tiny microphone on the hearing aids picks up your voice so you can speak out loud as normal, totally hands-free. We let one happy customer, Sue, explain...

"I love watching TV with my family, but they were getting tired of me always asking what was going on. But not any more! Plus, now I can answer my phone easily and I can hear the conversation so clearly. I don't feel like I'm missing out on normal, everyday things any more. They've made such a difference to so many parts of my life."



This incredible technology is now available at Boots, where you can spread the cost interest-free over 12, 18 or 24 months – plus, you'll get a five year warranty, free aftercare for life, and Boots Advantage Card points too!

Let our experts show you how easily Audeo B-Direct can help you – book your free appointment at a Boots Hearingcare near you! Call us on **0345 270 3916** or visit **bootshearingcare.com/book**

Terms & Conditions

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It's A Funny Old World

'I'm beginning to think it might be quite nice to have the odd gentleman caller'

Just the other day I bumped into a man I'd had a crush on for years. I was unhappily married at the time, but the crush went on for quite a while after my marriage ended. Nothing had ever happened between us. We'd had lunch together a few times but that was it. We've never even kissed, bar a friendly peck on the cheek, let alone had a steamy clinch.

Then recently, after a quick catch up, he said those three magic words: 'Fancy a lunch?'

The funny thing is, he was much smaller than I remembered. His height hadn't changed a bit, but in my head he was diminished. He wasn't the superman I had created in my imagination. He was an ordinary man. Nothing wrong with that, but I realised that my past longings to find true love had painted an idealistic picture of a person who had so much of what I was looking for.

When my ex-husband and I broke up five years ago I was determined not to rush into another relationship. If I'm honest, I'd always been a bad picker of men, which is ironic bearing in mind that as a trained couples counsellor and agony aunt, I was quite good at helping others with their relationship problems! A couple of times in the very dim and distant past I struck lucky with boyfriends, but the two long-term relationships I've had since were far from wise. One of the leaflets I offered through my agony column was called 'How to Spot a Rotter', and yet I couldn't see one right in front of my own eyes!

Now, after a five-year period of learning to live happily without a man, I'm only just beginning to think it might be quite nice to have the odd gentleman caller. I don't need a partner to make me happy now, which hopefully means I'm



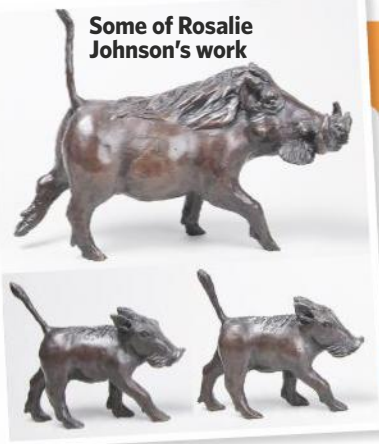
This week's columnist:
Author and counsellor
Caroline Buchanan

in a much stronger position to make a better choice. If a nice one comes along, that would be the icing on the cake – but it wouldn't be the main ingredient of a fulfilling, happy life by any means.

So, for anyone thinking of braving the dating scene again, I'd say make sure you're truly happy within yourself before you do. Most important, beware of projecting your deepest longings on to someone else. Just because you ache for someone who is loving, kind, trustworthy, bright and funny, it doesn't automatically mean that the man of the moment is all those things. Just because he turns up on time for your first date does not make him someone who is always reliable! Just because he says you're the person he's been waiting for since the year dot, it doesn't mean for certain you're the first woman to hear those words!

By the way, my former crush said the other day that he always thinks of me when he passes the restaurant where we used to lunch. He said it's changed hands now, but he suggested we try it out.

But you know what? That was two weeks ago and I haven't heard a word from him since. Do I mind? Not in the slightest. He's a man who has perhaps always given mixed messages... So could it be a lucky escape, perhaps?



Some of Rosalie Johnson's work

My Funny Old Week

Where I've been... For tea with a fascinating neighbour of mine who's in her 80s.

What I've seen... Some beautiful animal sculptures created by the artist Rosalie Johnson.

Who I've met... an old crush.

What I've bought... a specially designed eye make-up brush to try and wrestle yet again with the smoky effect!

The 15 Minute Rule: How to Stop Procrastinating & Take Control of Your Life (£7.99, Robinson) by Caroline is available on amazon.co.uk

NEXT WEEK
Pat Sharp

7 Ways To Get Back Your Get-Up-And-Go

Flagging in the run-up to Christmas? Follow these seven simple instructions to recharge your energy

Eat

Food is one of the best ways to give your energy levels a boost – but don't rely on sugar and processed carbohydrates, such as cake, biscuits, bread, pizza, pasta and pies. They can contribute to your malaise by altering your gut flora and interfering with your colon's production of the B vitamins – essential for energy in every cell in the body. 'Tea, coffee and sugar also overwork the adrenal glands,' explains nutritional therapist Judy Watson (judywatsonnutritionist.co.uk).

'Try to eat as "cleanly" as possible – with little or no processed foods, and

plenty of green vegetables, protein, and healthy oils (from nuts and seeds) to preserve your adrenals,' adds Judy.

Supplements can help fill gaps in your diet. Try **Pharmaton Vitality Capsules (£9.45 for 30 capsules, Superdrug)** for a unique blend of slow-release G115 Ginseng extract, vitamins, minerals and trace elements such as iron, zinc and magnesium.



Four food fuellers

❖ **Meat:** Packed with energy-boosting iron. Too little iron in your diet can cause anaemia, where there are too few red blood cells – or too little haemoglobin in them – to carry enough oxygen around the body. 'It's actually one of the most common reasons for feeling constantly tired and affects one in 20 post-menopausal women,' says GP Dr Tony Steele (doctorfox.co.uk). Other iron-rich foods include eggs, tofu, pulses, beans, brown rice, nuts and seeds, dark green leafy vegetables, and even iron-fortified cereals and bread. If you think you may be anaemic it's important to be correctly diagnosed by your GP (through a blood test), and you may be prescribed an iron supplement.

❖ **Eggs:** High in protein, a great source of sustained energy without the blood-sugar surge, and energy-giving nutrients such as thiamin, folate and B vitamins. Also good for vitamin D – try oily fish and fortified cereals and margarine too.

❖ **Almonds:** Full of protein and minerals. Grab a handful for an afternoon snack alongside some energising green tea.



❖ Oats:

A great slow-release complex carbohydrate, low in fat but high in minerals and vitamins, including energy-giving manganese, copper, iron and vitamin B. Try Protein Porridge Oats (£12.99 for 500g, Superdrug or strippd-uk.com).



Nap

Research shows that a quick 40 winks can revitalise you – tests on pilots by the American space agency NASA found that a 26-minute nap boosted alertness by 54%. Just try to make sure you don't sleep for more than 40 minutes – any longer and you'll slip into deep REM sleep and will feel groggy rather than refreshed when you wake. Optimum snooze time is around 2-3pm – any later and you could interfere with your night-time sleep pattern – and try to doze in a quiet, dark, warm room.

Drink

A recent GP survey found that one in five patients complaining of fatigue were in fact dehydrated. When you're not getting enough fluids, your blood volume is reduced and your heart has to work harder to pump blood around the body.

Judy says, 'We are made up of 70% water, and everything from your brain to your muscles relies on it. Coffee and alcohol are diuretics, so alternating these drinks with water is essential.'

Aim to drink 200ml of water for every hour for each 10 you're awake and eat at least five portions of fruit and veg – they'll contribute to your fluid intake.

To see whether you're dehydrated, look at the colour of your wee – if it's dark instead of pale yellow you probably need to drink more fluids.

If you're in need of a vitamin boost, try adding **Wellwoman Energy Tablets (£5.35 for 10 wellwoman.com)** for vitamins B6 and B12, iron and magnesium.



O



Bask

The importance of vitamin D from sunlight for bone health is well known, but experts are now linking it to energy levels too. In an Edinburgh study, medics found volunteers were able to cycle 'longer with less effort' after taking vitamin D.

'A deficiency may be linked to breast and other cancers, diabetes, neurological and metabolic disorders, and susceptibility to infections or heart disease,' says *Woman's Weekly* GP Dr Melanie Wynne-Jones.

'Our main source is sunlight, which stimulates the production of vitamin D in our skin; but the further north we live (and the more sunblock we

use to protect against skin cancers) the less we make. Just 15 minutes' daily sunshine on the face, arms and neck may suffice during sunnier months, but from mid-October to April, sunlight doesn't contain enough of the right UV rays.'

So we need to eat a good diet too (see left) And NICE (the National Institute for health and Care Excellence) recommends a daily 10-microgram vitamin D supplement if you're over 65 – or are housebound, pregnant, breastfeeding, you have dark skin, or cover your body or face for cultural reasons.

You can measure your vitamin D levels with a home-testing kit. BetterYou offers a blood-spot test in association with the NHS (£28, betteryou.com).

Pose

Yoga and t'ai chi moves are a great way to recharge your muscles by increasing blood supply to them.

Try the Warrior:

Step wide with feet in line. Front foot straight, bend front knee, knee in line with big toe, back foot turned in, back leg straight. Raise your arms. Lower both shoulders down and in towards the spine. Open the chest, breathe in and gaze along the middle finger. Take eight breaths, reverse step, repeat pose and take eight more breaths.

Breathe

Controlled breathing is naturally meditative and energy enhancing – getting an injection of oxygen into your bloodstream.

Try this exercise:

Sit with your spine tall and shoulders relaxed. Breathe in through your nose, so your belly rises like a balloon. Exhale (making a 'swoosh' sound) while

drawing your belly back towards your spine. In and out breaths should be quick and of equal length (one breath per second), rather like panting. Start with 10 breaths.

Move

It may be the last thing you feel like when you're tired but doing some exercise is the best instant energy giver. Even a 10-minute walk can pep you up, and the benefits increase the more exercise you do. Build up gradually until you reach the recommended two and a half hours a week of moderate intensity, such as cycling or brisk walking.

Try these instant rechargers:

- ❖ For the relatively unfit: Stand up and march on the spot to 100 counts to get blood flowing.
- ❖ For the fairly fit: Jog on the spot for 20 seconds, then march for 10. Repeat this eight times.





Brooch, £10, Oasis



Earrings, £8.99, H&M



Bag, £60, Dune



Boots, £14, Primark

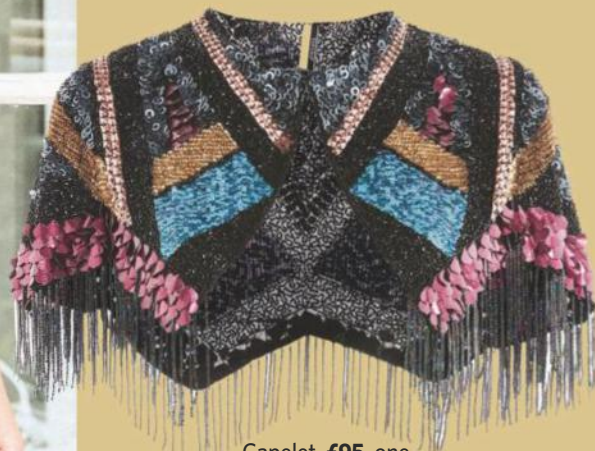
Available in three colours

Dress, £110, sizes 8-22, M&Co; shrug, £45, sizes s-l, Debut at Debenhams; shoes, £75, Dune; earrings, £9.99, Lindex; brooches, £12.99 for set, H&M; rings, £14 for set, Claire's Accessories; bag, £29.99, Zara



Glam Your

Complete your evening outfits with these festive finishing touches



Capelet, £95, one size, Topshop



Earrings, £15 for set of three, V by Very

Scarf, £35, Monsoon



Shoes, £69, Monsoon

Up to size 9

Up Dress



Kimono, £45, sizes 14-26, Elvi



Bag, £25, V by Very



Stole, £29, Accessorize



Belt, £3, Primark



Fastens with subtle keyhole opening



Shoes, £39, Debenhams

Dress, £29.99, sizes xs-l, Lindex; shoes, £22, Sole Diva at Simply Be; earrings, £12.99, Zara; necklace, £12.99, H&M; scarf (worn as belt), £35, Mint Velvet; bag, £49.99, Violeta by Mango; rings, £9.99 for set, H&M, and £14 for set, Claire's Accessories



Necklace, £14.99, New Look



Earrings, £12.99, Mango



Lined interior with two pockets

Bag, £49.99, Zara

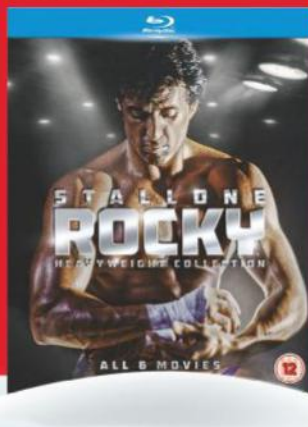
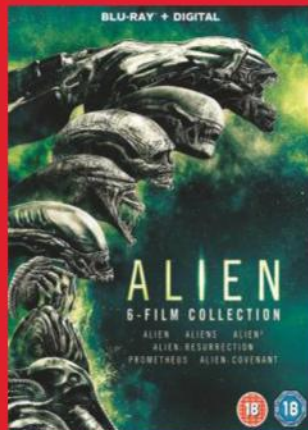
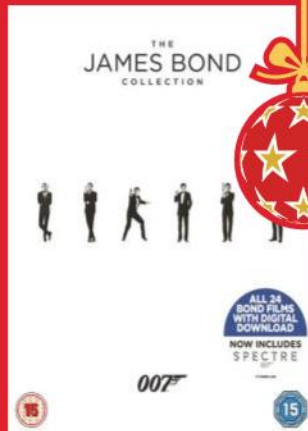
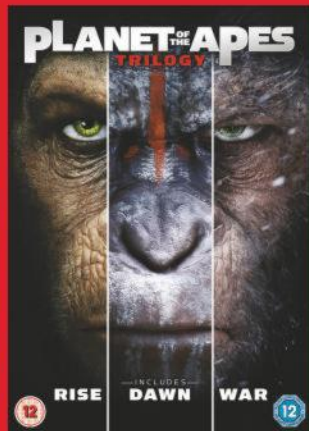
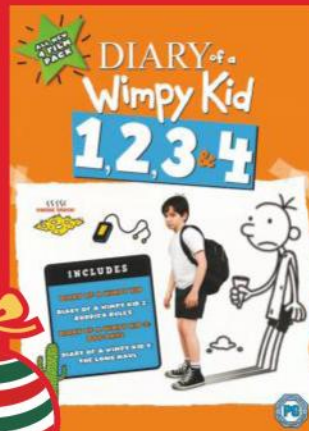


Ring, £6.99, New Look

STYLING: ELOISA JOHNSON. ASSISTED BY: YASEMIN CELEPI. HAIR & MAKE-UP: KATIE PETTIGREW AT LHA REPRESENTS, USING L'OREAL & ESTÉE LAUDER. MODEL: CARRELYN GARDNER AT MRS ROBINSON MANAGEMENT

NEXT WEEK
All That Glitters

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Try Something New

The Printed Trousers

These machine-washable trousers will jazz up your wardrobe and look great with heels or flats.
Trousers, **£15**, sizes 6-20, Primark



Wear It Smart

Blouse, **£24**, sizes 10-32, JD Williams



Necklace, **£22.50**, M&S



Wide fit

Shoes, **£35**, Simply Be



Faux fur

Stole, **£55**, Chesca at John Lewis



Wear It Casual

Jumper, **£24.90**, sizes xx-small-xx-large, Uniqlo



Shoes, **£67.50**, Boden



Bag, **£29**, Topshop

Wool blend

Removable zip-top compartment



Coat, **£99**, sizes 8-22, Twigg at M&S



Take The Blouse And Wear It Like This, Too



Blouse, as before



Skirt, **£49**, sizes 8-16, Sugarhill Boutique



Shoes, **£75**, Dune



Earrings, **£12.99**, Zara

Bottles Of Happiness

These new scents share similar fragrant notes to some classic perfumes. Time for an update, we think!

Every now and again, perfume has the power to transport us back to a time or a place from the past. There are complicated scientific reasons why a scent triggers our memory, namely that a smell, good or bad, can help spark the emotional part of our brain. Whether it's the fragrance you wore on your wedding day, something your best friend used to dab on, or the smell of happy, carefree summer days, we've all got a scent we love. But why not try these evocative new additions to upgrade your fragrance wardrobe...

Like the combination of citrus, floral and musky notes in *Calvin Klein Eternity Eau de Parfum*, £35 for 30ml? Then add *Tiffany & Co Eau de Parfum*, £52 for 30ml, to your Christmas list. It mixes tones of orange, iris, patchouli and musk for a floral yet powdery hit to your senses.

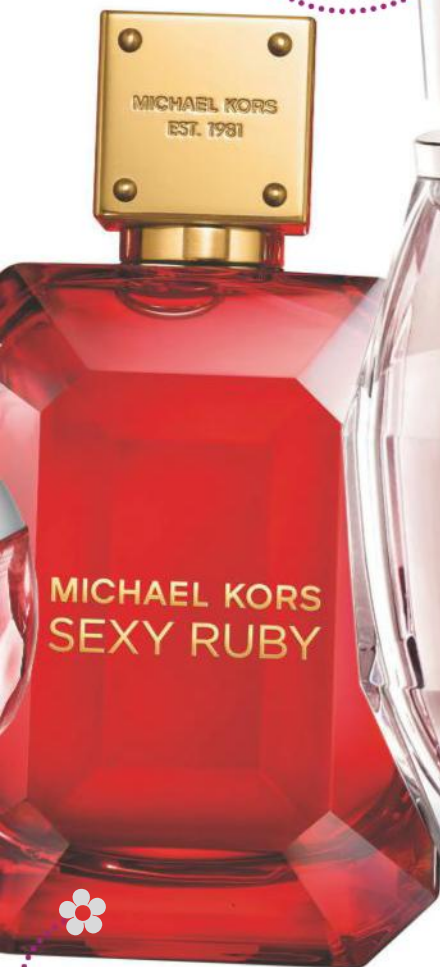
Loved the fruity floral *Dior Jadore Eau de Toilette*, £59.50 for 50ml? It's been a bestseller for years, thanks to the winning combo of mandarin, bergamot, jasmine, Turkish rose, plum and musk. If so try the new limited-edition *DKNY Be Tempted Icy Apple*, £41 for 50ml, which blends similar notes of mandarin, rose, jasmine, vanilla and musk.



Seen as one of the best fragrance creations ever, *Nina Ricci L'Air du Temps Eau de Toilette*, £31 for 30ml, was launched in 1948 with the spiciness of the carnation as its main note, teamed with rose and jasmine and the powdery scent of violet and iris. Want a modern update that falls into the same woody, powdery, floral category? Try the limited edition *Marc Jacobs Decadence Rouge Noir Eau de Parfum*, £98 for 100ml. The bottle alone will look fabulous on your dressing table!

Adore the flirty floral *Chanel Coco Mademoiselle Eau de Parfum*, £52 for 35ml, which blends rose, jasmine, patchouli, orange and vanilla? Upgrade to *Dolce & Gabbana The One Eau de Toilette*, £43 for 30ml, equally flirty, fresh and floral it mixes lily and white peach with vanilla, orange blossom and vetiver.

L *Eau d'Issey by Issey Miyake Eau de Toilette*, £41 for 50ml, launched a huge trend for fresh, aquatic fragrances. Who wouldn't fall in love with this feelgood fragrance that literally smells of a summer's day? Want to try a newer 'fresh as air' blend? **Viktor & Rolf Flowerbomb Bloom Eau de Toilette**, £45 for 30ml, is airy and fresh and combines scents of fruit, citrus and a note that is designed to smell like 'mountaintop air'.



If the calming wood and patchouli notes of **Aromatics Elixir Eau de Toilette**, £40 for 45ml – a bestseller for Clinique since it launched in 1971 – takes you back to happy times, then try **Elie Saab Le Parfum Feuilles d'Or Eau de Parfum**, £60 for 50ml, which combines warm woody patchouli with orange blossom, jasmine and ylang-ylang.

If you enjoyed making an impact with the warm, heady notes of **Mugler Angel Eau de Parfum**, £68 for 50ml – its combination of caramel, cotton candy and hot chocolate is unmistakable – then you have to try the newest blend, **Angel Étoile des Reves Eau de Parfum for Night**, £110 for 100ml, which blends mandarin, praline, vanilla and musk for a softer, more cocooning scent that's equally unusual and perfect for the evening.

Are you forever drawn to the dark, mysterious and powerful notes of **Dior Poison Eau de Toilette**, £46 for 30ml? Its combination of coriander, wild berries, honey and tuberose was a huge hit when it launched in the 1980s. Still like to make an impact with your fragrance? Then try **Michael Kors Sexy Ruby Eau de Parfum**, £46 for 30ml, which packs a heady punch with its mix of raspberry, pepper, orange blossom, jasmine, rose, wood and vanilla.

Match your fragrance to your mood

Have a few fragrances on rotation so you can match the right notes to how you want to feel...

Want to feel comforted? Choose a fragrance with notes of iris. It's warming, powdery and cocooning, too.

Want to feel sexy? Go for a floral blend of rose and jasmine with notes of patchouli mixed in.

Want to feel cheerful? Sweet sugary scents of caramel or vanilla or sweet flowers like orchid or frangipani will put a smile on your face.

Want to feel uplifted? Go for a citrus hit of orange, mandarin and bergamot.

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A Year Of Doing Things Right

My problem was that I married a male version of my mother. Mothers can get away with saying things like, 'You're not going out in that are you?'

Whose stupid idea was it to walk to the shops? Oh, yes, it was mine. Ha! All mine and mine alone.

I've no-one to blame but myself for all the long rolls of Christmas wrapping paper and last-minute gifts I've bought. Best of all, there's no-one at home to say I told you so or moan at me for wasting money on presents, so even though I've got sore everything, I couldn't be happier.

I didn't intend to buy so much. I only went into town for some emergency mince pies.

I bought them at the Christmas market. My mother can spot a shop-bought mince pie a mile away, but the market ones, while delicious, are less than perfect and I can probably get away with claiming I made them.

I didn't know she was coming for Christmas until this morning. That's another reason I walked to the shops. I needed to cool down.

The thought of having her to stay for a week from Christmas Eve is enough to make anyone crave cold air. I love her, but we've never been close.

I'm not cool. Walking always makes me hot and the jumper was a mistake as were the boots. I should have worn trainers.

I could have made my own mince pies, but Mum would

probably find that even more abhorrent than the ones in boxes from the supermarket.

I'm going to have to sit down just for a minute. I'm only five minutes from home, but if I don't take the weight off, I think I'm either going to fall over or my fingers will drop off.

The seat at the bus stop is empty, so I plonk myself down and rearrange my bags, but no matter how much I mess about with them, they still weigh a ton.

I was looking forward to my first-ever Christmas on my own. Kurt and I parted company on Boxing Day last year and at first it was weird being alone, but I soon got used to it.

I now experience the joy of

I can probably get away with claiming I made the mince pies

pyjama days without anyone nagging me to get dressed. I turn the heating on when I'm cold and open a window when I'm hot. And now I can sit with my feet up watching *Strictly* while eating a crisp butty and sipping wine and not have the little hand-held vacuum cleaner whirring round me and Kurt shouting, 'I don't know how you can watch this rubbish.'

My problem was that I basically married a male version of my mother. Mothers can get away with saying things like, 'You're not going out in that

are you?' and 'I wish you'd do something with your hair.' But husbands can't and shouldn't.

At least my mum never hit me. She's always said that words hurt more, but she's obviously not speaking from experience.

Time I was making a move. Just as I stand up the bus comes round the corner and I can't gather up my shopping fast enough before it pulls up beside me and the door opens. 'Oh, I'm not...'

A guy rushes up to me. He's wearing motorcycle leathers. For a second, I think he's going to mug me - how about that for being paranoid? That's Kurt's influence for you. He made me mistrust everyone to the point

where I think a guy in a leather jacket is after my sparkly snowman wrapping paper.

'Here, let me give you a hand. Those bags look heavy.'

My mother wouldn't approve of that. She'd have told him she was perfectly capable of carrying bags because she'd given birth the proper way, none of this Caesarean nonsense and when a woman has done that, she's capable of anything.

'My mother didn't burn her bra so men could open doors for her' is her favourite saying.

The bus is going back towards town which is the last place I want to be.

'No, really...'

'Not a problem,' the guy says. He's a bit breathless. 'I thought I was going to miss the bus. I've got to collect my bike from the garage. MOT.'

'When you've finished with your life story,' the driver prompts and we buy our tickets. Yes, I've got one back to town if you've ever heard anything so daft, but motorcycle guy will feel such an idiot if I tell him I wasn't waiting to get on the bus and I've always been mindful of the feelings of others.

I can easily get a bus back and I'm in no hurry to get home.

'Actually, you look as if you're on your way back from town,' the biker says and he looks dismayed, so I reassure him.

'I forgot something,' I say. 'Brandy butter for the mince pies. My mother likes to lift the lid and put a blob of it on top of the mincemeat.'

His face reflects how I feel about that practice. It's not a lie. I do need to get some, but I was going to add it to my supermarket order.

'I'll give you a lift home if you like,' he says, so I meet him outside the garage once I've got my tub of brandy butter.

'I'm looking for Greg,' I

Continued overleaf

say and there's a bit of whistling and cheering as Greg appears.

'I work here,' he explains with that charming rueful grin. 'Don't mind them.'

I had no idea there was so much storage space on a motorbike. It's huge, nothing like the dirt bikes my friends used to roar round on with me clinging on for dear life.

My mother was annoyed, but not because I'd been messing about with boys on bikes. She was annoyed that I was only a passenger and she brought up Granny's bra again.

It's a surprisingly smooth and comfortable ride home, not to mention fast.

'Always a passenger,' I can hear my mother's voice. 'When are you going to do something for yourself, Charlene?'

If she only knew. Would she be proud of me?

She liked Kurt. She liked that he made me do things outside my comfort zone, but I like my comfort zone. It's... well, it's comfortable and he was constantly pushing me.

'Get dressed. Get ready. Go for that promotion. Wear the red. Wear the black. Make a good impression.'

I'm sure my grandmother didn't burn her bra for that! No one should ever be made to do

He wouldn't approve of the Christmas tree and decorations and he'd have a fit if he saw I'd used drawing pins to stick the garlands to the ceiling, but he's not here, is he?

'Where did you get the money to do all this?'

'I work, Mum.'

'Shame you don't invest in a decent haircut.'

There it is, but I let it pass.

'Did you ever find out where Kurt went?'

'Never tried.'

'Aren't you curious?'

'Not at all.'

'What about his family? Do they know anything?'

'I wouldn't know.'

Actually I do know. Kurt's mum told me that she hoped he'd never come back. I wasn't the only one he bullied, but as far as I know, it never turned physical with his mum. He settled for destroying her confidence, but she's getting it back and we meet up for coffee once a fortnight. We call ourselves the Survivors' Club.

'I hope you don't mind, but I've got to go,' Mum tells me halfway through the week. 'All this colour everywhere is doing my head in. What possessed you to paint your spare room red? Even in the dark I know it's there!'

Kurt's mum told me that she hoped he'd never come back

anything they don't want to.

Greg drops me off at home and I start to prepare for Mum's stay. She's still holding out hope that Kurt will come back and everything will go back to the way it was.

But that's never going to happen. Not in a million years.

Mum arrives after lunch on Christmas Eve and immediately her nose starts to twitch.

'Are you burning scented candles, Charlene?'

'I am.'

'Kurt wouldn't like that.'

Exactly.

'He wouldn't like it that yellow you've painted the hall.'

Wait till she sees the rest of the house.

'I understand,' I say and try very hard to restrain my joy at the news. I do love her, but she's better in small doses.

'I'm going to stay with your brother, Craig, instead. It'll be a lovely surprise for him.'

She always refers to Craig as my brother, as if I might have forgotten who he is. I daresay she refers to me as, Charlene, your sister. Perhaps it's because of all those years Craig and I were apart.

I call ahead to warn him and he rings me back a couple of hours later.

'She's here,' he says. 'Thanks for the heads up.'

'Good luck.'

'You all right, Sis?'

'I'm more than all right.'

'Thanks for all the presents.

The kids love them.'

'Just making up for lost time, Craig, my brother.'

We both laugh and I hear Mum's voice, 'What's the joke?'

'Better go. See you soon.'

Love you, Charl.'

I love that I'm close to my brother and his family again after all the years Kurt spent driving a wedge between us, but I must admit I have a shiver. It's over a year since Kurt disappeared.

That makes

and I swung the kettle and hit him square in the back. I knew from experience that if I dodged a blow, it made him madder.

He hit the fridge with his face and bounced back, so I hit him again and he landed on the floor and didn't move.

I called Craig, who I hadn't seen or spoken to for years and he came over straightaway. Mum doesn't approve of women not standing on their own two feet, but mine weren't big enough for this.

Craig
hugged
me



it sound like he vanished into thin air, which is how it appeared to people.

He'd been horrible to me all over Christmas and I was looking forward to him going back to work, but on Boxing Day he waved a cheque at me.

'Voluntary redundancy,' he said. 'Got it Christmas Eve. I'm paying this bad boy in tomorrow and I'm not going to rush to find another job. I might get a new car and have a holiday.'

'It won't last forever,' I said. 'We should pay off some of the mortgage.' That was all it took.

I remember him shouting that it was his money to do as he liked with just before he lashed out.

Maybe I was possessed by my bra-burning grandmother. I ducked and he staggered

and said I should have called him years ago.

Kurt woke up to find Craig looming over him.

'You're going to take this cheque and disappear,' he said, slapping the cheque against Kurt's chest. 'Understood?' And Kurt got the message.

On 2 January with Christmas and New Year behind me, I go to the motorcycle garage. Greg's face lights up when he sees me.

'I want to buy a motorbike,' I say. 'It'll be cheaper to run than my car.'

'You've come to the right place,' he says, smiling.

'I know,' I say. 'I've spent the past year doing a lot of things right. I think I've got the hang of it at last.'

THE END
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Winston's marriage to Clementine was central to his success



He faced down his opponents and rallied the nation

See stars shine in *Darkest Hour*

This thrilling WWII epic is already tipped for awards glory

Political intrigue, high-octane drama and a stellar cast make *Darkest Hour* a gripping, must-see movie. With Gary Oldman playing newly appointed Prime Minister Winston Churchill during the early days of World War II, the film is the inspirational story of four vital weeks when Churchill rallied the nation.

Kristin Scott Thomas is Churchill's whip-smart wife Clementine, with Lily James playing his loyal secretary.

As conquering Nazi forces advance, the Allied army is trapped on the beaches of Dunkirk, and the fate of Europe rests with Churchill.

He must make the ultimate choice: negotiate peace with Hitler, or fight on against appalling odds. But it's not all



stoicism and cigars – Academy Award nominee and BAFTA award winner Gary Oldman's beguiling portrayal means this is much more than a period drama – it brings a crucial part of British history to life.

With a script by *The Theory*

of *Everything* writer Anthony McCarten, *Atonement* director Joe Wright lends some dramatic intensity to this enthralling story. Be inspired as Britain braces itself for the nation's darkest hour.

In cinemas January 12.

WIN!
Tickets to the UK premiere of *Darkest Hour*

We're giving away a pair of tickets to the UK premiere of *Darkest Hour* in London on 11 December 2017. Visit competitions@womensweekly.com and answer a simple question to be in with a chance to win. You can also see the prize terms and conditions.

The competition closes at 23.59 on 3 December 2017. The winner of the tickets will be notified on 5 December 2017.

Freeze-Ahead Suppers



ACTING COOKERY
EDITOR, NICKY

With these delicious dinners on ice you can relax and enjoy the celebrations

Slow-Cooked Moroccan Lamb Shanks

SERVES 4

- * 4 small lamb shanks
- * 1tbsp chicken seasoning (we used Bart)
- * 2tsp ground coriander
- * 2tsp ground cumin
- * 1tsp paprika
- * 2tbsp olive oil
- * 1 large red onion, sliced
- * 3 garlic cloves, crushed
- * 2 x 400g cans chopped tomatoes
- * 2tsp rose harissa paste (we used Belazu)
- * 1 red pepper, deseeded and sliced
- * 500g (1lb 2oz) prepared butternut squash and sweet potatoes
- * 2 x 400g cans chickpeas
- * Coriander sprigs and couscous, to serve

1 Heat the oven to 180°C, Gas Mark 4. Season the lamb with salt, pepper, chicken seasoning, coriander, cumin and paprika.

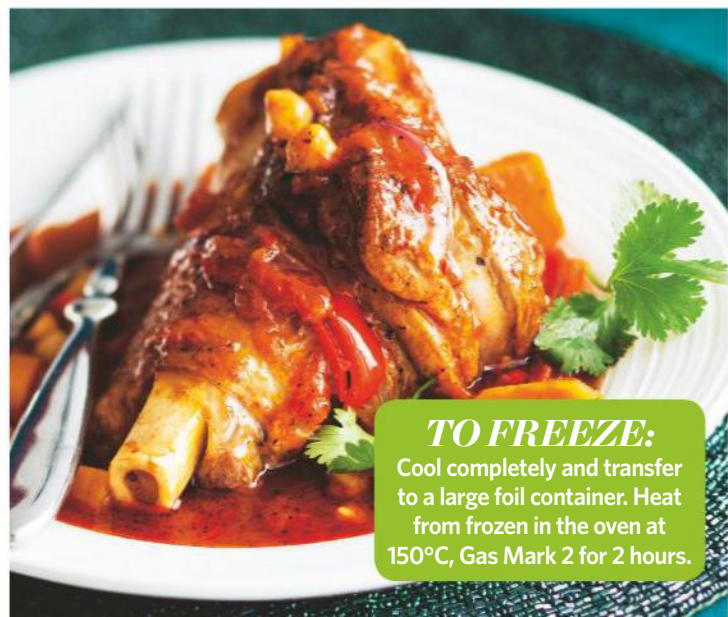
2 Heat the oil in a flameproof casserole, add the lamb and brown for 10 mins, turning occasionally. Add the onion, and garlic and cook for 5 mins.

3 Add the tomatoes, harissa paste, red pepper, butternut squash and sweet potatoes and bring to the boil.

4 Cover and cook in the oven for 1hr 30 mins, until the lamb and vegetables are tender. Add the chickpeas and cook for a further 30 mins. Serve with coriander sprigs and couscous.

PER SERVING: 764 calories, 34g fat (12g saturated), 48g carbohydrates

Woman's
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TO FREEZE:

Cool completely and transfer to a large foil container. Heat from frozen in the oven at 150°C, Gas Mark 2 for 2 hours.



NICKY'S TIP

Red wine or beer can be used instead of Madeira – both will give a good, rich flavour.

Madeira Beef Casserole

SERVES 6

- * 4tbsp olive oil
- * 1kg (2¼lb) stewing steak, cut into cubes
- * 4 red onions, peeled and finely sliced
- * 25g dried porcini mushrooms
- * 2 garlic cloves, finely chopped
- * 2tbsp flour, seasoned
- * 600ml (1pt) Madeira wine
- * 400g can chopped tomatoes
- * 2tbsp sun-dried tomato paste
- * Finely grated zest and juice

of 1 orange

- * 500ml (16 fl oz) good quality beef stock
- * 1tbsp Worcestershire sauce
- * 500g (1lb 2oz) baby Chantenay carrots, trimmed
- * 4 thyme sprigs
- * 3 bay leaves

1 Heat the oven to 170°C, Gas Mark 3. Heat 1tbsp of the oil in a large flameproof casserole. Cook the beef in batches until browned, adding a little extra oil as needed. Set the beef aside.



2 Add the onions to the casserole and cook for 10 mins until soft. At the same time, pour 100ml (3½fl oz) hot water over the dried mushrooms and leave for a few mins to soften. Add the garlic to the onions.

3 Return the beef to the casserole, add the flour, stir well and cook for 2 mins. Drain the mushrooms, straining and reserving the liquid. Add the mushrooms, strained liquid, Madeira, tomatoes, sun-dried tomato paste, orange zest and juice, stock, Worcestershire

sauce, carrots and herbs to the casserole. Season.

4 Bring to the boil, cover and cook in the oven for 2 hrs, until the meat is tender.

PER SERVING: 512 calories, 14g fat (3.5g saturated), 25g carbohydrates

TO FREEZE:

Cool then pack into a freezerproof container. Defrost in the fridge overnight then reheat in a pan for 25 mins, until piping hot.



Coq Au Vin With Puff Pastry Hats

SERVES 8

- * 200g (7oz) bacon lardons
- * 16 chicken thigh fillets
- * 4tbsp plain flour, seasoned
- * 60g (2oz) butter
- * 4 shallots, halved
- * 3 garlic cloves, crushed
- * 2 leeks, trimmed and sliced
- * 600ml (1pt) white wine
- * 600ml (1pt) chicken stock
- * 4tbsp Dijon mustard
- * 200g (7oz) baby button mushrooms, halved
- * 3tbsp double cream
- * 2 x 225g (2 x 8oz) puff pastry sheets
- * 1 egg, lightly beaten
- * 8 x 300ml (½pt) ovenproof dishes, about 10cm (4in) diameter
- * 2 baking paper-lined baking trays

1 Heat the oven to 200°C, Gas Mark 6. Heat a large flameproof casserole dish, add the bacon lardons and dry-fry for 5 mins, or until crispy. Remove from the pan and set aside.

2 Toss the chicken thigh fillets in 2tbsp of the seasoned flour to coat. Heat the butter in the casserole until sizzling, then fry the chicken, in batches, until golden. Remove from the casserole, reduce the heat and add the shallots, garlic and leeks.

3 Cook for 5 mins until softened. Add the remaining flour, stir to mix, then add the wine, turn up the heat and cook until reduced by about one-third.

4 Add the stock and mustard and return the chicken. Bring to the boil, cover and cook in the oven for 40 mins.

5 Add the mushrooms, cream and cooked lardons and cook for a further 30 mins.

6 Unroll the pastry and, using one of the ovenproof dishes as a guide, cut out 8 rounds. Score the pastry in a criss-cross pattern with a sharp knife. Arrange the pastry on the baking trays, brush with beaten egg and bake for 10-15 mins until golden. Spoon the chicken into the dishes and top with a pastry hat.

PER SERVING: 651 calories, 35g fat (15g saturated), 29g carbohydrates

TO FREEZE:

Cool and freeze the chicken casserole. Freeze the unbaked pastry rounds interleaved with baking paper in a freezer bag. Defrost chicken overnight in the fridge and reheat in a pan for 30 mins. Cook the pastry rounds from frozen for 15-20 mins.

Polenta & Dolcelatte Lasagne

SERVES 6

- * 500g (1lb 2oz) ready-made polenta, sliced
- FOR THE TOMATO SAUCE**
- * 750g (1½lb) ripe vine tomatoes, halved
- * 3tbsp olive oil
- * 6 garlic cloves, peeled
- * 150g (5oz) pitted kalamata olives, sliced
- * 4tbsp chopped fresh oregano
- * 1tbsp sun-dried tomato paste
- FOR THE DOLCELATTE SAUCE**
- * 200g (7oz) baby leaf spinach

- * 250g (9oz) tub ricotta cheese
- * 100g (3½oz) toasted hazelnuts, chopped
- * 200g (7oz) Dolcelatte, cubed

1 Heat the oven to 190°C, Gas Mark 5. For the tomato sauce, put the tomatoes in a large roasting tin, drizzle over the oil, season and roast for 30 mins. Add the garlic, olives and oregano and roast for 15 mins. Tip into a blender, add tomato paste and whizz to a rough puree.

2 For the Dolcelatte sauce, put the spinach in a pan with a dash of water and cook until just wilted. Drain, then roughly chop. Stir the spinach into the ricotta with three-quarters of the nuts and Dolcelatte and season well.

3 Spoon half the tomato sauce into a large ovenproof dish. Top with half the polenta and half the Dolcelatte sauce. Repeat the layers. Scatter over the remaining hazelnuts and Dolcelatte. If freezing, cover and freeze now.

4 If you are not freezing, bake in the oven for 20 mins,

until golden and bubbling.

Serve at once.

PER SERVING: 503 calories, 38g fat (13g saturated), 18g carbohydrates

TO FREEZE:

Assemble the lasagne in a foil baking tin or suitable freezerproof and ovenproof dish. Cover with freezer wrap and freeze at the end of Step 3. Defrost in the fridge and bake in the oven for 20 mins until golden and bubbling.



NICKY'S TIP

An easy dish to serve when friends come round. Just add salad and new potatoes.



Leek & Lime Salmon En Croute

SERVES 8

- * 750g (1½lb) puff pastry
- * 1tbsp olive oil
- * 400g (14oz) leeks, sliced and washed
- * 2tbsp cornmeal or polenta
- * 2 x 500g (2 x 1lb 2oz) pieces salmon fillet, skinned
- * Finely grated zest and juice of 2 limes
- * 2tbsp hollandaise sauce
- * 1 egg, beaten

1 Heat the oven to 220°C, Gas Mark 7. Roll out a quarter of the pastry to a shape just larger than one of the pieces of salmon. Transfer to a baking sheet and bake for 10mins.

2 Flatten the puffed up pastry with a fish slice and bake for another 5-10 mins until golden. Set aside to cool.

3 Heat the oil in a frying pan, add the leeks and cook for 10 mins to soften.

4 Sprinkle the pastry base with the cornmeal or polenta and lay one of the salmon pieces on top. Season the fish, sprinkle over half the lime zest and juice, spread the hollandaise over the top and then cover with the leeks.

5 Sprinkle the remaining lime zest and juice on the other piece of salmon and place on top of the leeks. Season.

6 Roll out the remaining pastry, on a piece of baking paper, large enough to cover the fish. Run a lattice cutter over the pastry or cut small slits to create a lattice effect. Brush the edges with beaten egg and lay over the salmon, egg-side down. Tuck the edges under the base. If freezing, cover and freeze at this stage.

7 If not freezing, brush with beaten egg and bake for 35 mins until the pastry is golden and the salmon is cooked.

PER SERVING: 619 calories, 40g fat (15g saturated), 15g 37g carbohydrates

TO FREEZE:

Cover in freezer wrap and freeze at the end of Step 6. Bake from frozen. Brush with beaten egg and bake at 220°C, Gas Mark 7 for 30 mins. Cover with foil and cook for a further 30 mins.

Puttanesca Meatballs

SERVES 6

FOR THE SAUCE

- * 2tbsp olive oil
- * 2 onions, peeled and finely chopped
- * 2 garlic cloves, chopped
- * 4-5 anchovies, drained
- * 3 x 400g cans chopped tomatoes
- * 1tsp caster sugar
- * 1tsp chilli flakes
- * 1½tbsp tomato puree
- * Handful of black pitted olives, drained
- * 3tbsp capers, drained
- * 2-3tbsp chopped fresh parsley and basil

FOR THE MEATBALLS

- * 1kg (2¼lb) beef steak mince
- * 2 shallots, peeled and finely chopped
- * 1 egg, beaten
- * 2tsp dried oregano
- * 1-2tbsp seasoned flour, to coat
- * Pappardelle and freshly grated Parmesan, to serve

flakes and tomato puree then simmer on a very low heat until the sauce starts to thicken.

3 For the meatballs, mix the mince with the shallots, egg and dried oregano, and season well. Bring the mince together with your hands then shape into golf ball-sized meatballs and set aside.

4 Heat the remaining oil in a large frying pan over a medium-high heat. Lightly coat the meatballs in the flour and cook in batches until browned.

5 Add the meatballs to the sauce, along with the olives and capers, and cook on a low heat for 40 mins, until the meatballs are firm and cooked through. Stir in the herbs and serve with pappardelle and freshly grated Parmesan.

PER SERVING: 334 calories, 12g fat (4g saturated), 17g carbohydrates

TO FREEZE:

Pack the meatballs and sauce into a freezer container, chill and freeze. Defrost in the fridge then reheat in a pan for 20 mins until piping hot. Serve with freshly cooked pasta.

1 For the sauce, heat half the olive oil in a shallow pan over a medium heat and cook the onions and garlic until softened. Add the anchovies and cook for a further 2 mins.

2 Tip in the chopped tomatoes, stir in the caster sugar, chilli



NEXT WEEK
Showstopper Desserts

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Make It Personal



 **Easy-peasy**

Create unique decorations for your tree or make initials and give them as gifts to friends and family.

Craft & Home Editor, Esme

Esme's Tip

Try painting the letters in your favourite Christmas colours or opt for neutrals like white, grey and cream so the decorations can be used all year round.



TEMPLATE

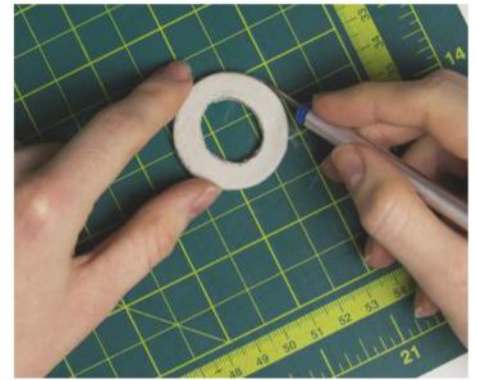


TAKES 48 hrs (including drying)

YOU WILL NEED

- ❖ Alphabet cutters
- ❖ White air-drying clay
- ❖ Watercolour or acrylic paint
- ❖ Small paintbrush
- ❖ Wooden skewer
- ❖ Craft knife
- ❖ Thin ribbon or twine
- ❖ Rolling pin
- ❖ Rolling pin guide rings (to get an even thickness when rolling)
- ❖ Cutting mat
- ❖ Paper
- ❖ Old newspaper

Stockists Uppercase alphabet cutter set, £3, DAS white air drying modelling clay, £2.80 for 500g, both Hobbycraft (hobbycraft.co.uk; 0330 026 1400).



3 Gently smooth out any markings on the surface with your fingertips and use a craft knife to neaten up the edges.

4 Use the skewer to pierce a hole through the top of the letters for hanging. Allow the clay to dry for at least 24 hours.



5 Once dry, use the paintbrush and either watercolour or acrylic paint to colour and detail your letters. Place old newspaper down to protect your surfaces and get creative!

We've chosen to paint ours with festive greenery like mistletoe, pine cones and holly in a mixture of blues, greens and reds. Use our templates as a guide to trace your design on the clay decorations using a pencil. Apply a small amount of paint and allow to dry.



1 Take a small piece of clay from the block and begin rolling it out on a clean surface. Use the rolling pin guide rings to get an even thickness of approximately 8mm depending on how thick you want your decorations to be.



2 Pick out the alphabet cutters you'd like to use, we chose to spell the word JOY with our decorations. Push the alphabet cutters into the clay and carefully push the clay cutouts free of the moulds.

Alternatively, cut out the letters freehand using a craft knife or print out your chosen word on a computer, cut out, place over the clay and trace around using the craft knife.



6 Thread thin ribbon or twine through the hole, trim and tie into a loop. Now your decorations are ready to hang.

NEXT WEEK
Festive Table Ideas

TV Times



The **ORIGINAL**
Christmas TV guide

On sale 12 December 2017

Britain's best loved TV magazine
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Chocolate panettone, **£16.95**, Carluccio's



½ pint mugs, **£19.95 each**, Emma Bridgewater

Fisher Price Laugh & Learn train, **£15**, Tesco



EcoTools make-up brushes, **£14.99**, Boots

Things to do notebook, **£4**, Matalan



18 Super Stocking Fillers

The perfect presents to pop in a stocking this Christmas

...all under **£20**

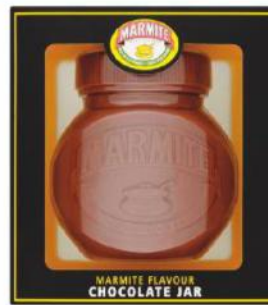
L'Occitane men's gift set, **£10.80**, escentual.com



Coffee syrup set, **£5**, Wilko



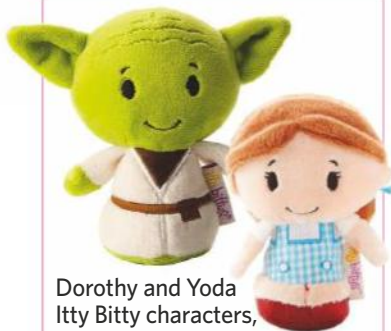
Westie milk jug, **£6**, George Home



Marmite chocolate jar, **£6**, Tesco



Disney mug, **£12**, Debenhams



Dorothy and Yoda Itty Bitty characters, **£6**, Clintons



Headphones, **£13.99**, amazon.co.uk



Ghost Dream Mini gift set, **£8**, The Perfume Shop



Travel cup, **£12**, Bhs



Hot-water bottle, **£3.99**, Home Bargains



Buttermilk fudge, **£2.99 each**, available from Booths, Selfridges and Lakeland

Paddington Bear jigsaw, **£6.95**, museumoflondonshop.co.uk



Floral bike bell, **£7**, Halfords

Hardy Fragrant Patio Shrub

Non-stop blooms from April to October make Daphne 'Eternal Fragrance' unbeatable for flowers and fragrance. This unusual, semi-evergreen daphne with tubular, pink flushed blooms flowers on new growth, finishing in late October and November with attractive red berries, so the displays just keep coming! With a compact, slow growth habit and deliciously sweet fragrance, this elegant shrub is perfect for planting in containers close to a doorway, where you will fully appreciate the fabulous heady fragrance as you pass. Easy to grow. Height and spread: 90cm (36in). Supplied as 3-branched plant in 10.5cm pot.



- ❁ Buy 1 for ~~£19.99~~
£14.99
- ❁ Buy 2 for ~~£39.98~~
£19.98



**WW Gardening Magazine Editor
Geoffrey Palmer's Tip**

'Pot up Daphne shrubs and grow them on in frost free conditions. When plants are well grown and all risk of frost has passed, gradually acclimatise to outdoor conditions for a period of 7 to 10 days prior to planting in their final positions.'



To order, call 0844 573 6057** and quote WWK2181Z; or complete the coupon below

TO: Woman's Weekly Daphne Offer, Dept WWK2181Z, PO Box 162, Ipswich, Suffolk IP8 3BX			
Please send me the following	Price	Qty	Total
TCB40503A Daphne 'Eternal Fragrance' x 1	£14.99		
TCB10489PA Daphne 'Eternal Fragrance' x 2	£19.98		
TCA56850P Large Patio Pot & Saucer x 1	£9.99		
TCA59095P Large Patio Pot & Saucer x 2	£17.99		
TCF13015 Snips x 1 Pair	£7.99		
TCB47551 incredibloom® Fertiliser 100g Pack x 1	£4.99		
TCB47552 incredibloom® Fertiliser 750g Pack x 1	£12.99		
	P&P	£4.95	
	GRAND TOTAL	£	

I enclose a cheque made payable to **T&M** (with your name, address and WWK2181Z on the back) for the sum of
£.....
Please DO NOT send cash

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Closing date: 28 December 2017. Plants dispatched from December 2017. All orders will be acknowledged by letter or email, advising you of the expected dispatch date.

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Mrs/Miss/Ms/Mr (delete as applicable) _____

First name Surname

Address

..... Postcode

Daytime tel no (incl code)

Email address

Snow White

Woman's Weekly
TESTED BY US
So It Works
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**Knitting
Editor
Teresa**

Make and starch 20 of these

beautiful snowflake motifs then attach to a circular wire base. The wreath is made up of four simple rounds of doubles, half trebles and treble crochet stitches.



Easy-peasy

Instructions overleaf

MEASUREMENTS

Diameter of wreath
30cm

MATERIALS

- ❖ One 100g ball DMC Petra 3 in White (54460)*. (80g makes 20 snowflakes)
- ❖ 2.50mm crochet hook.
- ❖ 30cm diameter flat round metal wreath frame
- ❖ 1 bottle of Impex Hi-Tack fabric stiffener
- ❖ 1m of 15mm-wide Berisford Double Faced Satin Ribbon in Red 15

❖ Yarn and materials are available from theknittingnetwork.co.uk, see below right

TENSION

Snowflake motif measures 7 x 7cm, using 2.50 hook and White.

ABBREVIATIONS

Ch, chain; **slst**, slip stitch; **chsp**, chain space; **dc**, double crochet; **htr**, half treble; **tr**, treble.

NOTE

Yarn amounts are based on average requirements and are therefore approximate. Instructions in square brackets are worked as stated after 2nd bracket.



Snowflakes are overlapped to form the wreath, which you could display without a ribbon, if you prefer

Snowflake motif (make 20)

Using 2.50 hook make a slip knot leaving a 20cm excess, 6ch, slst in first ch to form a ring.

1st round: [3ch, 1dc in ring] 12 times.

2nd round: Slst in first ch, 1dc in next 3ch, [3ch, 1dc in next 3ch] 11 times, 1ch, 1htr in first dc.

3rd round: [6ch, 1dc in next 3ch, 3ch, 1dc in next 3ch] 5 times, 6ch, 1dc in next 3ch lp, 1ch, 1tr in top of htr at end of previous round.

4th round: [5tr, 3ch, 5tr in next 6ch, 1dc in next 3ch] 5 times, 5tr, 3ch, 5tr in next 6ch, 1dc, in last tr of previous round, slst in next tr. Fasten off leaving a 20cm end.

To make up

Place snowflake motifs on a tray and coat with fabric stiffener keeping the long ends out of the liquid as much as possible. Leave to dry completely (this may take 1-2 days). Once dry, use your long cast-on and cast-off ends to attach to the wires of the

wreath frame. Continue to attach motifs in this way, slightly overlapping each, until the whole ring has been covered. Neaten the back by securing ends and trimming. Attach red ribbon. Cut a ring out of stiff white card and attach to the back of the ring to hide ends if desired.



Get 10% off your next order at theknittingnetwork.co.uk. To claim your discount, enter code **WWSNOW** at the checkout. Terms and conditions One use per customer. Cannot be used in conjunction with any other promotion. Offer ends 10 Jan 2018.



NEXT WEEK
Men's Socks

*YARN SUBJECT TO AVAILABILITY. PHOTOS: BARRY MARSDEN. DESIGNER: PENNY HILL

Great Knits for Christmas



For 100s of quality knitting and crochet patterns visit theknittingnetwork.co.uk/tkn



Womens Vintage Sparkly Shrug Knitting Pattern £2.99 **Code WLD182**
Measurements: To fit bust sizes 81 (86) (91) (97) (102) (107) (112) (117) (122) cm / 32 (34) (36) (38) (40) (42) (44) (46) (48) in



Mens Christmas Jumper Knitting Pattern £2.99 **Code WMD002**
Measurements: To fit chest sizes 86-91 (97-102) (107-112) cm / 34-36 (38-40) (42-44) in



Mens Tweed Fair Isle Sweater £2.99 **Code WMD040**
Measurements: To fit chest sizes 91 (97) (102) (107) (112) (117) cm / 36 (38) (40) (42) (44) (46) in



Christmas Pudding Jumper, Hat & Socks Baby And Childrens Knitting Pattern £3.99 **Code WBD035**
To Fit Ages: 6-12 months, 12-18 months, 24-36 months, 36-48 months



Fair Isle Girls Cardigan Knitting Pattern £3.99 **Code WCD039**
Measurements: To fit ages 2-3 (3-4) (4-5) years



Kids Polar Bear Hat And Jumper Knitting Patterns £4.99 **Code WCD021**
Measurements: To fit ages 2-3 (4-5) (6-7) years

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How to Order

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More Trees, Please!

To celebrate National Tree Week, **Adrienne Wild** shares her tips on how to choose, plant and care for trees in your garden

You don't necessarily need a reason to plant a tree, but it's a good way to celebrate a special occasion like the birth of a child, a wedding day or the passing of a loved one.

Trees have the potential to outlive several generations, so it's important to buy wisely and plant with the future in mind, not just sink it in the ground to give your garden instant height and a feeling of maturity.

Plant a tree today and you'll be playing an invaluable role in maintaining the wellbeing

Acer griseum is often voted as the number-one tree for a small garden

of the planet too. These eco-friendly plants are known as 'lungs of the earth' and help to filter pollution from the air, recycle water and prevent soil erosion. In your own garden, a tree will provide food and shelter for insects, birds and animals, and could even be a source of fruit and nuts.

Children, especially, will find it fun to grow a tree from seed and also enjoy nurturing a seedling that they've collected from a walk in the country or even Granny's garden. Not only educational, in time, 'their' tree could become a symbol of the changes in their own lives.

Chat with friends and you'll find that often trees have played a memorable role in their lives, whether it's when they made their first den, daredevil attempts at climbing, precariously swinging from a rope fixed on to branches or

when a tree became a shady retreat to rest and reflect, or a hideaway for romantic liaisons.

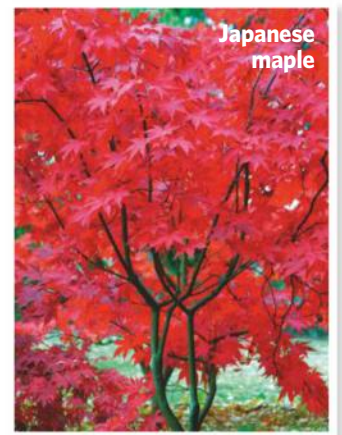
Apple trees, in particular, appear to provide some of the best-loved memories, even more so when the fruit was made into unforgettable pies and the prunings became fragrant firewood.



Prunus
'Amanogawa'



Acer
griseum



Japanese
maple

If you're inspired to plant a tree, it's essential that you buy the right one for your plot. Before splashing the cash, you need to know your soil type as some, such as Japanese maples, prefer slightly acid soil, while flowering cherries do better on chalky and alkaline soils. Look at how much space you have and research the tree's mature height and spread, as well as the speed at which it grows, as it can be very costly to cut down large specimens.

Where space is limited, there are slim-fit trees with a fastigiata (single column) habit that can be squeezed into

a corner of the garden. One of the best for a small garden is the maidenhair tree or ginkgo biloba. This ancient tree is the oldest deciduous conifer on the planet and was around when the dinosaurs roamed – a talking point when friends come over for a barbecue.

Tree-planting tips



1 Garden centres sell container-grown plants all year round, which can be planted immediately, except when the soil is waterlogged or frozen, or during prolonged periods of drought. New trees will establish quicker without competition from grass and weeds, so clear the site in advance ready for planting.

2 Simply dig a hole that's 2-3 times the width of the root ball and deep enough so that it sits about 3cm below the soil surface. To aid drainage, fork over the bottom and sides of the hole before placing the plant. Use a backfill soil that's been enriched with soil conditioner and bone-meal fertiliser.

2 Stake the tree if necessary for the first year or so, to protect it from blowing over. Even with half-standard and standard specimens, stakes shouldn't extend above one-third of the tree's total height, and tree ties should be fixed to the stake, about 13mm from the top, using a galvanised nail. Always use flexible tree ties with an adjustable rubberised spacer, so that it can be adjusted as the trunk expands.

3 Water the tree thoroughly, allowing the backfill and remaining soil to settle, then water again. This will eliminate any air pockets. Finally, top-dress with a layer of mulch to help keep water in and competitive weeds out.

The Japanese cherry, *Prunus* 'Amanogawa', won't take up much room either and will thrive even in narrow borders next to a building. It produces pale pink clouds of almond-scented, pompom flowers in April, followed by a spectacular fiery show of yellow, orange and red foliage in autumn.

Acer griseum is often voted by gardeners as the number one tree for a small garden. It's also known as the paperbark maple because its cinnamon-coloured bark naturally peels away in thin layers. In autumn, the leaves turn vibrant shades of deep crimson before falling off to reveal the bark, one of the highlights of a winter garden.

If you're looking for a small specimen tree for a manicured lawn, woodland setting or wild garden, you'll no doubt find a rowan, or mountain ash, appealing as it's a beacon for wildlife. Bees adore the scented, creamy-white flowers

of early summer, and birds love to gorge on the orange or red berries in autumn. It's a perfect plant for problem soil too, and *Sorbus aucuparia* 'Asplenifolia', which has a narrow pyramid-outline, is ideal for a gloomy small garden, with dramatic autumn foliage colours too.

For something more exotic, there's the easy-going honey locust tree, *Gleditsia triacanthos*. The variety 'Sunburst' makes an impressive mop-headed tree, clothed with weeping foliage that's initially yellow, then light green.

National Tree Week
National Tree Week starts on 25 November and is the UK's largest tree event celebrating the winter tree-planting season. The week culminates with Tree Dressing Day on 3 December. To find out what's happening near you, visit treecouncil.org.uk

Award-Winning Prunus

This architectural ornamental cherry has an upright, columnar habit making it ideal for small gardens! Clusters of slightly fragrant, soft pink-white blossoms simply smother the branches in late spring and are highly attractive to bees. Come autumn, the leaves of this RHS AGM variety turn to fiery shades of yellow, orange and red giving a long season of interest in the garden. A fantastic low-maintenance addition to sunny borders, where it can be grown as a specimen tree or focal point.

Height: 8m (26ft).

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Do They Know It's Christmas?

Each year, Mandy trailed around the shops doing her Christmas shopping at the last minute. Would this year be different?

Mandy couldn't believe how busy the shops were. It was manic!

Desperately she fought her way through the packed china department. Yes, there it was – the teapot that perfectly matched the teacups and saucers she'd given Anita for her birthday.

Just as she leant forward to pick it up, another woman grabbed it. Mandy couldn't believe it. It was the last one on the shelf, the end of the range, too, and she'd probably never get another one.

She held her breath as the woman inspected it, pulled a face and then miraculously put it back. Quick as lightning, Mandy snatched it up and examined it. She smiled. No chips, it was perfect. Carefully she put it in her basket and struggled back through the crowded department store.

'Excuse me!'

Mandy turned to see a harassed woman, laden with bags, trying to grab her son.

'No, Billy, you can't have that teddy. You're 10, for heaven's sake!'

Mandy smiled at her. She'd been there, done that. At least her children were old enough to look after themselves while she went Christmas shopping.

The woman caught Mandy's



eye. 'Why do we do it?' she said.

Mandy laughed. 'Because it's fun!'

'If you like torture,' the woman replied. 'Billy! Put that down before you break it.'

Mandy smiled as she struggled through the crowds to the tills. Then she gasped. Surely all these people couldn't be in the queue? They were. And each person seemed to have at least 20 things and she'd only one in her basket.

She made her way to the end, then pulled out her Christmas

Quick as lightning, Mandy snatched up the teapot and examined it

list and smiled as she ticked Anita off. She was always the most difficult person to buy for. Her mother-in-law always gave her a long list of things that she wanted, but they were all so expensive. She and Tom struggled to pay the mortgage, let alone buy Christmas gifts on top. And each year, Mandy trailed around the shops, searching for something that would suit her mum-in-law and not bankrupt them. Then, because she could never find anything, she ended up buying

something on the Saturday before Christmas, the busiest shopping day of the year!

'You should be more organised!' Anita had told Mandy last year. She'd called round on Christmas Eve to find a frazzled Mandy frantically wrapping presents.

Organised! Mandy couldn't believe it. She had a full-time job, three children, two dogs, 10 stick insects and five gerbils to look after. If she wasn't organised, her family would starve and go out each day in

dirty clothes with holes in them. Anita, who'd had just Tom and hadn't worked for 30 years, should have a taste of her life. Just for one hour.

Slowly, Mandy edged forward in the queue.

'Have yourself a merry little Christmas,' sang Judy Garland over the shop loudspeakers. Mandy laughed. Since when had the words 'little' and 'Christmas' ever gone together? Not in her house by the size of her list. Still, it was all done. And usually she couldn't afford

to buy everyone exactly what they might like, but this year she'd managed it.

Mandy's smile froze on her face. Oh, no! She hadn't got anything for Grandad. She looked around her and saw a rack of warm fleecy jackets – just perfect for him. But she'd nearly reached the till.

She turned to the woman behind her.

'Would you mind if I just nipped over there?'

She would. Mandy could tell. Reluctantly she left her place and hurried over to the fleeces. There was a green one in her grandad's size. He'd love it.

Wearily, she made her way back to the end of the queue. The speakers were now playing *Do They Know It's Christmas?* 'Not in this shop,' thought Mandy, wincing as someone barged past, treading on her toes. After this, she'd have a coffee, she promised herself.

But she didn't. The store cafe had an even longer queue. 'Mandy!'

She turned to see her friend Suzy.

'My goodness. Have you bought up the whole shop?'

'You should see what's in the car!' Mandy smiled.

'I've got what I wanted,' said Suzy, holding up a small bag. 'Tell you what, there's a lovely Italian restaurant nearby. Why don't we go for lunch there?'

It was wonderful to be away from the crowds. Mandy sat back, sipping her wine.

'I'm so pleased with myself,' she said. 'And for once, my mother-in-law can't complain.'

'You bet?' Suzy laughed.

'Well, I guess she might. So don't tell her.'

'Tell her what?' Suzy asked.

'She's always going on about how disorganised I am leaving my Christmas shopping too late. But she can't complain this year,' Mandy said proudly. 'Not only am I 12 months early, but I've saved myself a fortune buying all this year's Christmas presents on Boxing Day!'

THE END

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Dr Melanie Wynne-Jones has over 30 years' experience as a GP

Dr Melanie

Early Diagnosis For Endometriosis

Catching this common condition early is key to stopping damage and problems

Surgery News

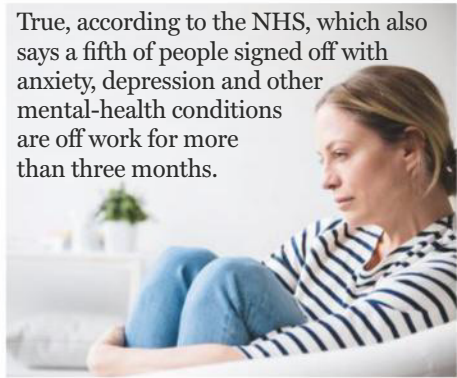
Fake Meds

University students have been warned against diagnosing and treating themselves with online prescription medicines by the Medicines Healthcare products Regulatory Agency, which says it can be both dangerous and expensive. Good advice for all of us, actually - its 'FakeMeds' campaign says more than half of all medicines bought online aren't genuine. If you want to know more before buying, read the MHRA's top 10 tips at fakemedics.campaign.gov.uk.

True Or False?

One in three sick notes are issued for mental-health problems.

True, according to the NHS, which also says a fifth of people signed off with anxiety, depression and other mental-health conditions are off work for more than three months.



Early Checks For Preterm Babies

A new guideline from NICE, the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence, aims to improve the identification of developmental problems and disorders in children born preterm (before 37 weeks' gestation) by setting standards for assessments and follow-up. Most preterm babies develop normally, but earlier diagnosis of physical or learning disorders, or emotional/behavioural problems should help parents, as well as the children. Find out more at nice.org.uk/guidance/ng72.

Endometriosis is one of the commonest women's diseases to need treatment; it affects around one in 10 of us - sometimes even as teenagers. But diagnosing the condition takes on average more than seven years, as symptoms are often blamed on other conditions.

In endometriosis, womb lining cells are found outside the womb, in and around the pelvis, sometimes in the abdomen, or even further away; they respond to the hormone cycle, and bleed when periods occur. It may have no symptoms or produce monthly pain - and long term it can cause internal scarring, chronic pain, disability and infertility.

The cause isn't known, but it may be related to genes (it can run in families), the immune system, hormones or inflammation. NICE (the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence), recently issued new guidelines to help speed up diagnosis and treatment, as well as improve specialist endometriosis services.

The symptoms

You may have severe period pain, chronic pelvic pain, or deep pain during or after lovemaking; periods may be heavy too. You may also notice period-related/cyclical symptoms from other organs, for example, blood in the urine/stools,

pain when you urinate/open your bowels, diarrhoea/constipation, bloating, backache or even nosebleeds. Not surprisingly, this can lead to fatigue, depression and difficulties with everyday activities and relationships. Endometriosis is also a common cause of infertility; it can produce adhesions,

5 Tests You May Need

- 1** An internal examination to check for tenderness, swellings and other conditions, such as infection (you can ask for a nurse chaperone if you wish, or take someone with you).
- 2** Blood tests for hormones, anaemia, thyroid problems and other conditions, depending on your symptoms.
- 3** Transvaginal ultrasound scan (the 'condom scan') and/or abdominal scan to look for endometriosis deposits in pelvic and abdominal organs.
- 4** A magnetic resonance (MR) scan if the transvaginal ultrasound scan is inconclusive, or if deeper deposits are suspected in the bowel, bladder or ureter.
- 5** A diagnostic laparoscopy (telescope examination via the tummy, using a general anaesthetic) to check around the pelvis for endometriosis, rule out cancer and/or take samples (biopsies).

HELPLINES

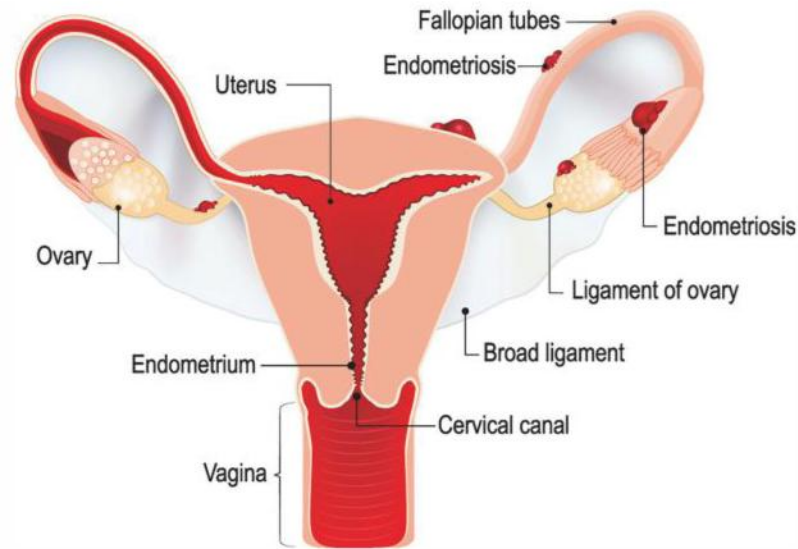
Our phone lines give you access to professionals who can offer you help and advice

Dr Melanie Wynne-Jones helplines

**Stress 0904 470 0681 Migraine 0904 470 0682
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Heartburn 0904 470 0685 Heavy periods 0904 470 0686**

Calls cost 65p per min plus your telephone company's network access charge and last approx. four

Advice from Woman's Weekly's Doctor



blocked Fallopian tubes, ectopic pregnancy or ovarian cysts (very occasionally these can become cancerous).

Keeping a symptom diary may help you and your doctor to piece it all together, but symptoms can overlap with other gynaecological/medical conditions, so you may need a range of tests (see tips box, left). Your GP can refer you to a gynaecologist, especially if initial treatment doesn't help; NICE says you should be referred to an endometriosis specialist centre if you have suspected or confirmed deep endometriosis involving the bowel, bladder or ureter (tube from kidney to bladder). Teenagers may be referred to a specialist paediatric and adolescent gynaecology service.

The treatment

Untreated, endometriosis often improves, but deterioration, relapse or recurrence are also common. Treatment depends on your age, your symptoms, whether you want to get

pregnant and your preferences, and your GP or specialist should explain your options at each stage. Some women manage with pharmacy painkillers, but your GP can prescribe stronger ones if necessary. Hormonal treatment, such as the combined oral contraceptive pill, can override your natural cycle, preventing further monthly bleeding and scarring, without affecting future fertility.

Troublesome endometrial deposits can be destroyed (ablated) or removed during a laparoscopy (see tests), or you may need a full abdominal operation to remove ovarian cysts, the womb itself (hysterectomy), or to treat bowel or urinary problems. Some forms of surgery can improve fertility, as well as symptoms. Your GP can refer you for psychological/emotional support if needed; you can also get information from nice.org.uk/guidance/ng73/informationforpublic, and support from Endometriosis UK (endometriosis-uk.org; helpline: 0808 808 2227).

Jan de Vries alternative helplines

Osteoporosis 0904 470 0812 Bladder problems 0904 470 0813
Rheumatism 0904 470 0814 Losing Dad - how will Mum cope?
0904 470 0871 Depressed 0904 470 0873 Arthritis 0904 470 0874

Q My friend's ECG shows a 'prolonged QT interval'. Why is this dangerous?

ECGs (heart tracings) provide information about electrical activity and the shape/size of heart muscles and valves during each heartbeat. The size, pattern and distances (intervals/time) between the electrical waves (P,Q,R,S,T and U) can be used to diagnose heart damage such as heart attacks, irregularities such as atrial fibrillation, heart strain and leaky/narrowed valves. A prolonged QT interval means the heart is taking longer to recharge between beats; it affects around one person in 2,000, although many aren't aware they have it.

It can be inherited (a genetic defect affecting chemicals inside heart muscle cells) and cause heart rhythm problems with palpitations,

dizziness, blackouts or even cardiac arrest; these may occur in childhood or later life, or be triggered by sudden stress, noise, exercise or during sleep. Your friend may need treatment with drugs or even a pacemaker; near-relatives may be at risk and need testing too (see bhf.org.uk).

Prolonged QT syndrome can also be triggered by medicines, such as antibiotics, antidepressants, antihistamines, 'water pills' and some that are used to treat heart disease or psychosis, so your friend will be given a list of pharmacy and prescription drugs to avoid.



Q I'm catching my toe when I walk - is it just another ageing thing?

This sounds like foot drop, which can occur in younger people, too. It makes the front of the foot harder to lift off the ground; you may find yourself 'high-stepping' or swinging your foot to the side.

Raising your foot is controlled by the common peroneal nerve, which branches off the sciatic nerve and winds round the top of the fibula (thinner bone next to the shin bone, below the knee). Foot drop is a sign that the nerve isn't transmitting the brain's instructions properly, and has many causes. These include compression (squashing),

including simply crossing the legs repeatedly, prolonged kneeling or wearing a plaster cast. The nerve can also get trapped by conditions affecting the spine, pelvis, hip or leg, or stop working as part of a wide range of neurological/medical conditions, some of which can be serious. It can also lead to falling.

Your GP can refer you to a neurologist for tests, including X-rays, scans and nerve conduction studies. Treatment depends on the cause; you may also be helped by a brace, specialist splint or shoe, physiotherapy, nerve stimulation or surgery.

Maya was shocked by the change in her hair. Fullness and volume were replaced by thinness and lifeless hair. She had to do something.

I PANICKED – MY HAIR WAS THINNING!

The hair I found in my brush, in the shower and on my cardigan was unfamiliar to me. It was thinning like never before. How could this be happening?

I HAD TO DO SOMETHING

I found out my mother experienced the same problems when she was younger, and she accepted her fate. But much of my personality is in my hair, and I did not want to have the same problems. I read about the importance of hair nutrients, so I went looking for a good supplement.

MY HAIR NOW FEELS FULLER

I was recommended a natural product from Sweden called Hair Volume™, which contained a special apple extract. I have now used this supplement for 2 months and I am really satisfied. My hair feels full and healthy and even my nails feel much stronger. The best part is that the shedding has almost stopped completely. This is proof to me that proper nutrition on the inside helps you look your best on the outside. **I highly recommend Hair Volume to women who want to promote full and beautiful hair.**

Maya N., Sweden



DID YOU KNOW?

Hair Volume contains 4 proven hair growth promoting ingredients: Apple extract, Millet extract, L-Cystine and vitamin B5. But Hair Volume also contains more of these ingredients, in one tablet, than any other leading hair supplements. Visit us online to learn more about Hair Volume.

TEST YOURSELF

- Is your hair looking dull and thin?
- Do you experience hair shedding?
- Are your nails brittle?
- Are you finding grey hairs? *
- Do you want to nourish your hair naturally?
- Are you looking for more hair volume and shine?

If you answered YES to these questions, Hair Volume is definitely something you should try.



You can find **Hair Volume™** in Holland & Barrett and Leading Independent Health Stores.

For an information leaflet call 0800 389 1255 or purchase online at www.newnordic.co.uk

Health Choices

WELLBEING SOLUTIONS
For your body and mind



LEIGH WALTON, 60, a sales rep from Worcestershire, was initially sceptical about magnetic jewellery, which she says has helped her pain

'Magnets Helped My Migraines'

Using migraine medication helped, so I relied on popping a couple of pills when I felt the symptoms coming on. But when a friend mentioned magnetic jewellery might help me, I decided to give it a go.

I wasn't that hopeful, to be honest, and I just bought the necklace because it looked pretty. I kept it on, day and night, and I've only had a handful of migraines since. That was two years ago and I can't believe the difference it's made.

I've since bought a couple of bracelets and a pair of earrings, and Mum's tried it, too. Her migraines were even more debilitating than mine and as she'd got older, she started suffering from tension headaches, too. She had tried everything over the years, including medication and even Botox, and was

more sceptical than me.

But after five days, she phoned me to say, 'I can't believe it, I haven't had one migraine or headache!' Nine months later, and she still hasn't.

I'm no doctor, so I don't understand the science behind it, but they think magnets may help your circulation by attracting the iron in your blood. I can't prove that my lack of migraines and my

mum's experience

is down to the magnets, but it seems too much of a coincidence.

I don't take any medication for my health generally so if wearing this jewellery helps me stay healthy as I grow older, I'm more than happy to do that.

*** Magnetix Wellness (020 8819 9781; magnetix-wellness.com) sells a range of magnetic jewellery.**



The Power Heart earrings, available from Magnetix Wellness

What's This?



The Fitness Happy Planner (£20, happybags.co.uk)

This may be all you need to help keep your health and fitness on track next year. It runs for 12 months from whenever you want, allowing you to plan meals, workouts, calorie intake and water consumption, as well as set weekly goals. Perfect as a daily diary or a bullet journal, and great for your bag as it's compact.

PHOTOS: REX. IF YOU HAVE CONCERNS ABOUT YOUR HEALTH, SEE YOUR GP

If you usually... Sneeze into your hand... Try this instead...

Sneeze into the crook of your elbow

It's much more hygienic to do this. Researchers in Australia, which has had its worst flu season in 15 years, say it's an effective way of capturing harmful bugs. Sneezing into your hand and then touching something, such as a door handle, means you're more likely to spread the virus.



3 Ways To Counteract Vaginal Dryness

1 Try a vaginal cream or moisturiser, such as Vagisan MoistCream (RRP 14.99 for 50ml, vagisan.com), a hormone-free water-based cream.

2 Give yourself time to become properly aroused before having sex.

3 Consider HRT. It replaces hormones which decline during menopause, leading to symptoms such as vaginal dryness, but discuss the pros and cons with your GP.



Don't Miss The Magic

A simple hearing test could help you enjoy Christmas fun and festivities to the full

Gradual hearing loss is one of the most common problems affecting us as we age. You may not even realise how much it's impacting your day-to-day life, like constantly having to ask people to repeat themselves.

Worries about not being able to hear properly can even discourage you from joining in with social gatherings – and at this time of year that could mean you're missing out on family get-togethers and other joyful Christmas events.

There's no need to be embarrassed about it. One in six* of us are affected in this way. So don't put up with hearing loss or allow it to alter the way you live. You can have a



quick check at your local Specsavers Audiologists. It only takes three minutes and there's no need for an appointment – just pop into your local store and ask a member of staff. This will indicate if you'd benefit from a full test.

Once you've had your full hearing test, if there's a level of loss in either ear, you can choose

from a wide variety of neat and discreet hearing aids to suit your lifestyle. You'll be surprised at the difference they can make.

From candlelit carol services and grandchildren's nativity plays, to drinks with friends or family feasts, make sure you're ready to enjoy everything the festive season has to offer – and hear every word.

Are the signs of hearing loss affecting you?

If any of these situations sound familiar, or you have concerns about a friend or family member, get in touch with Specsavers Audiologists for a free hearing check

1 You feel reluctant to attend busy social events with lots of people, like parties or office celebrations, because you're concerned you won't be able to hear the conversations.

2 The volume on your TV or radio is turned up to a level that you find comfortable, but all your friends and family tell you it's much louder than they would like.

3 Background noise like music or chat makes it extremely difficult for you to distinguish what people are saying, so you tend to avoid places like pubs or restaurants.

4 When you're watching TV, whether it's the news or a favourite drama series, it sounds as though all the presenters or actors are mumbling instead of speaking clearly.

Find out more

• To book a free hearing test or for more information about them, call **0800 023 2920**, or visit **specsavers.co.uk/hearing**.

• Download the Specsavers Hearing Check App to determine your level of hearing loss, and whether you'd benefit from a **FREE** hearing test at Specsavers.

• Specsavers Audiologists are accredited by the NHS to provide hearing services across more than half of England. Check if you qualify for free NHS-funded hearing aids online, or at your local store.



Here To Help

Coach, counsellor and writer **Keren Smedley** has worked for more than 20 years helping people to make positive changes to their lives

Try some role reversal

Q In my opinion, my brother's daughter is an attention-seeker and rather neurotic. Whenever something difficult crops up in her life, she becomes ill. I don't doubt that she is ill but I'm sure there's an emotional component. My brother and his wife would be horrified if I said this but I find it hard to sympathise with them about her health. I also think they should be looking at her issues and offering her some proper support.

Ali, Bristol

A Turn the tables for a moment and imagine this was your child and your brother was thinking the same thing. Would you welcome him telling you and advising you what to do about your child? If you'd think it was none of his business, then I suggest you follow your own principles and say nothing. However, if you truly believe you'd welcome it, then before you say anything think through what you'd like them to say and where they could be supportive. Again, follow your own advice and offer some suggestions. Be prepared, though, for them to tell you to mind your own business, as it's their child and their choice how they behave.

Now you can both hit the reset button

Q I have a friend who believes I should be there for her whenever, and for however long she wants to talk. I've stopped answering the phone to her when she calls if I haven't got a lot of time, but during one recent call with her, I thought I'd pressed the mute button when it was still turned on and she heard me complain to my husband about her. I know I upset her and now don't know what to say.

Miriam, Leeds

❖ Keren welcomes your letters, emails and texts, but she cannot reply to individual cases and will select correspondence at random for publication.

Our daughter has left our lives

Dear Keren

My daughter has married into a family where her mother-in-law and her husband appear to control everything. At the wedding, her mother-in-law tried to stop us being in any photos and my daughter went along with this. The day after the wedding, we contacted my daughter but she told us she never wanted to see or hear from us again. I have no idea why except I know her mother-in-law doesn't like me. The wedding took place in Australia, where they live, and we had to spend another fortnight there not seeing my daughter. It was her birthday while we were there but no contact was made. I've tried to call on numerous occasions but she won't answer. My other children say I must leave it now, and if she wants to get in touch, she will. I don't know what do. Should I try to approach her again or do as my children say and leave it for my daughter to get in contact one day? My heart breaks every day over this.

Name and address withheld

This 'new life' may not be her whole life



I am sorry, as this must be a very painful situation for you. Your daughter has decided for the time being that she doesn't want to be in touch and it appears that, however hard you try, she isn't going to respond. So your strategy isn't working. Your other children want you to stop trying as it's only hurting you and this makes them sad. That said, they might have a good point. If you stop 'holding on' to your daughter, she may feel able to get back in contact one day. Even when we're not physically in contact with people, it appears that they can feel the connection. If you let her go and allow her to do whatever she needs at the moment, things

may well change. I offer no guarantee, of course, but doing something different raises the possibility of a new outcome. It also gives you a chance to focus on what you've already got, which is your other children whose company and lives you can enjoy.

A I'd have thought sorry would be a good start! You had your reasons but hearing someone complaining about you is always going to be hurtful. You chose not to confront the issue and, as invariably happens, these things come to light but not in the best way. Once you've apologised for talking about her, explain why you behaved as you did. Acknowledge

that it seems neither of you is meeting each other's needs and that you'd like to have a friendship where both of you felt valued and wanted. Together, discuss what needs to happen to improve the relationship.

Email WomansWeeklyPostbag@timeinc.com **Write to Here To Help, Woman's Weekly, 161 Marsh Wall, London E14 9AP** **Visit** Keren's site at experiencematters.org.uk

KEREN'S HELPLINES

Worrying: manage your fears **0904 470 0716**
Concerned about memory loss? **0904 470 0717**
When your children leave home **0904 470 0831**

How to cope with ageing parents **0904 470 0719**
Coming to terms with loss and grief **0904 470 0804**
How to banish your empty feelings **0904 470 0802**

Sacred Uluru in the Red Centre

The awe-inspiring Great Barrier Reef

Fancy An Australian Adventure

If you're thinking about a trip Down Under, make the most of your holiday with

Sydney

Canberra may be the capital of Australia, but Sydney's the city everyone wants to see. It's Australia at its best: buzzy and cosmopolitan, but still laid-back. On top of great bars and restaurants, world-class museums and iconic sights, there are some terrific beaches. Stroll around the historic Rocks district then grab a waterside table at Circular Quay and watch the ferries sail past the Opera House. Later, take a cruise on the glittering waters of the harbour or, if you're feeling bold, join a climb up the Harbour Bridge for

views you'll never forget. Be sure to visit Bondi Beach for some sun-worshipping and top-notch people-watching.

Melbourne

Australia's second largest city has a mellow European feel to it, with cobbled lanes and wide boulevards, elegant colonial-era buildings and shopping arcades, bustling markets, and cafes where you

can sit and relax over a great cup of coffee. Take the tram to the seaside suburb of St Kilda to visit vintage fairground Luna Park and see penguins by the pier. Discover Australian art at the National Gallery of Victoria, sip cocktails in the bars of bohemian Fitzroy and eat your way around the restaurants, where you'll find everything from tasting menus by trendy chefs to authentic Italian pizza or Vietnamese street food. If you're a sports fan, catch a day at the races or a football or cricket match - Melbourne loves its sport, so it'll be worth it for the atmosphere alone.



The city of Melbourne

Uluru and the Red Centre

Australia's 'Red Centre' is the heart of the outback, a remote landscape of arid desert, rocky gorges and ancient Aboriginal sites. The must-see here is, of course, Uluru - formerly known as Ayers Rock - a vast sandstone formation that is thought to have begun forming 550 million years ago.

The site is sacred to the local indigenous people so it's disrespectful to climb the rock (and will be banned from October 2019). Instead, take a tour around the base with an Aboriginal guide and learn how the indigenous people survived in this remote and inhospitable landscape, long before it was discovered by tourists. Full-day tours usually end with a classic Red Centre experience: watching the sun set over the rock. Less well-known (and less crowded with tourists), but definitely worth seeing, is Kata Tjuta, a group of huge rock domes that are also considered sacred. If you like a hike, follow the Valley of the Winds walk, which takes you

Great For Tranquil Travellers

Take a day trip from Sydney to go for a walk in the idyllic Blue Mountains, so-called because of the blue haze that rises from the eucalyptus forests as tiny droplets of oil mix with water vapour and catch the sunlight.



WORDS: FRANCES QUINN. PHOTOS: ALAMY

Adventure?

our guide to the highlights

Sydney's cosmopolitan Circular Quay

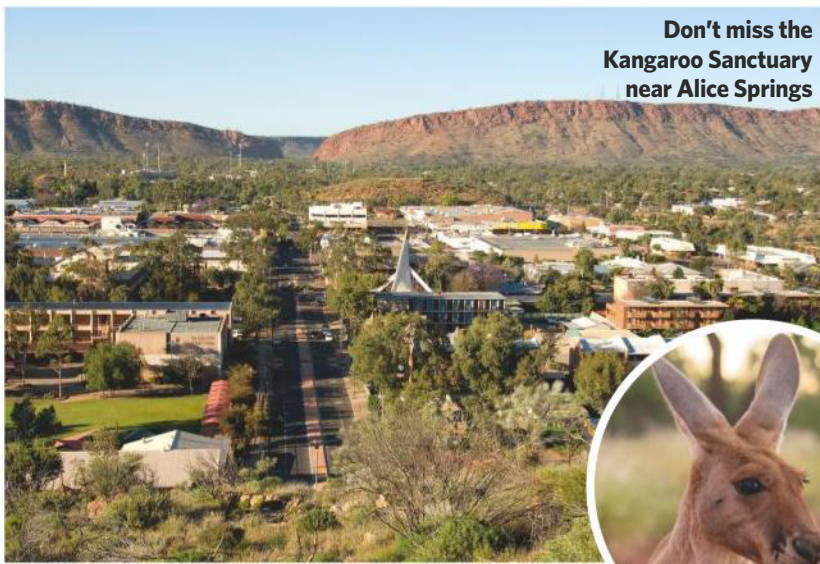


Great For

Independent Explorers

If you're visiting Melbourne, hire a car and follow the Great Ocean Road, one of the world's most scenic coastal drives. You'll pass golden beaches and sheer limestone cliffs, fringed by the crashing waves of the Southern Ocean, and drive through pockets of eucalyptus forests where you can see koalas dozing in the branches just feet from the road. Stop off along the way in sleepy seaside towns like Lorne and Port Fairy, and eat fresh shellfish overlooking the ocean.

Don't miss the Kangaroo Sanctuary near Alice Springs



through the domes, revealing breathtaking views.

If you have time, spend a day or two in the Outback town of Alice Springs, exploring the galleries of Aboriginal art and visiting the Royal Flying Doctor Service to get an insight into the practical realities of life in such a remote and sparsely populated region. And if you watched the BBC's *Kangaroo Dundee* series, you can meet its stars, Chris Barnes and his orphaned joeys, at The Kangaroo Sanctuary just outside the town.

Cairns and the Barrier Reef

Cairns is the gateway to tropical Australia, a seaside city where the heat and humidity create a relaxed pace and you're more likely to find yourself sitting in a bar with a cold beer than ticking off the sights. But it's also the ideal base for exploring northern Australia's twin iconic sights: the reef and the rainforest. Take a cruise out to the Great Barrier Reef and

see technicolour fish through a glass-bottomed boat or, if you're feeling more adventurous, swim or snorkel in the clear blue waters or even learn to dive – there are lots of beginners' courses available. You can do the reef in a day trip, but if you've got time, take a two- or three-night cruise – the best ones have a marine biology expert on board to tell you all about the reef and its wildlife.

Back on land, take a trip to the Daintree Rainforest, a World Heritage Site that is home to more rare and threatened plants and animals than anywhere else in the world. Join a river cruise to spot crocodiles or 'jungle surf', riding ziplines to explore the

forest canopy. There are walking and hiking trails through the jungle, crystal-clear mountain pools to swim in and spectacular white-sand beaches where you could very easily believe no one else has ever set foot. Again, you can do it in a day trip, but for a more relaxing experience, stay a night or two in a wilderness lodge and experience the sights and sounds of the rainforest waking up at dawn.

Getting there

Airlines flying to Australia include Qantas, British Airways, Cathay Pacific and KLM, and flights start at around £450. The flight time is around 24 hours and, as you'll have to change planes en route, many people prefer to break the journey with a one- or two-night stopover; Singapore, Hong Kong, Bangkok, Dubai or Hawaii are popular choices.

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Rhine, Strasbourg & Heidelberg

Selected departures from May to October 2018. Price includes:

- ❖ Guided tour of Koblenz
- ❖ Relax in Boppard with ample time to explore the stunning castle - a must
- ❖ Cruise through the spectacular Rhine Gorge
- ❖ Visit to Mainz - capital of the Rhineland and a centre of Germany's wine lands
- ❖ Guided tour of majestic Heidelberg, follow in the footsteps of philosophers and poets
- ❖ Enjoy a guided tour of historic Strasbourg - capital of Alsace
- ❖ Take a scenic drive through beautiful Alsatian countryside to the town of Colmar
- ❖ Visit Cologne and see its magnificent Gothic Cathedral



The Douro, Oporto & Salamanca

Selected departures from April to November 2018. Price includes:

- ❖ Guided tour of Oporto with visit to port wine cellars
- ❖ Scenic cruising through the picturesque Douro Valley
- ❖ A full day excursion to Salamanca with guided tour and flamenco show
- ❖ Tour to the medieval village of Castelo Rodrigo
- ❖ Traditional music recital with dance display
- ❖ Guided tour of Mateus Palace and its gardens
- ❖ Dinner at a typical Portuguese quinta
- ❖ Visit to the picturesque town of Lamego
- ❖ Lunch at Alpendurada Monastery overlooking the river



Rhine Cruise to Switzerland

Selected departures from April to October 2018.

Price includes:

- ❖ The chance to experience medieval Koblenz
- ❖ Visit to the pretty, romantic town of Rüdesheim - centre of the Rhineland wine trade
- ❖ Cruise through the spectacular Rhine Gorge
- ❖ An evening in Speyer, dominated by the imposing cathedral
- ❖ Guided tour of Strasbourg, with its wealth of sights
- ❖ Visit to the old walled town of Breisach
- ❖ Tour of the beautiful Black Forest and lakeside town of Titisee
- ❖ Tour of some of the finest Swiss Alpine scenery, seeing the Jungfrau and the Eiger, Interlaken and the stunning lakeside town of Lucerne



The Blue Danube

Vienna, Budapest & Salzburg

Selected departures from April to October 2018.

Price includes:

- ❖ Guided tour of Vienna and tour of Budapest
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A Great Place To... ...Take Your Dog On A Cottage Break



Suffolk *Gladwins Farm, Nayland*

Welcome to doggy paradise. Gladwins Farm has 10 cottages (sleeping two to 16) and is set in 22 acres of farmland, in a county with 3,500 miles of public footpaths and several beaches you can take your dogs on to.

There's a two-hour circular countryside walk by the river Stour, starting at the farm, which incorporates a detour to the dog-friendly Anchor Inn. Here you'll find a warm welcome and locally sourced food. Make sure you leave room for the not-so-local but oh-so-decadent Belgian waffle!



Nearby 'Constable country' – Dedham and Flatford, on the Essex border – is an area of outstanding natural beauty, where artist John Constable painted his celebrated works.

And while your best friend takes a nap, you can relax in



Chelsworth Cottage at Gladwins Farm

your hot tub (most cottages have one), take a dip in the heated indoor pool or play a set on the tennis court.

Staying There Premier Cottages (premiercottages.co.uk; 01206 262261)

has almost 400 dog-friendly four- and five-star holiday cottages around the UK. Chelsworth (sleeps eight) at Gladwins Farm starts at £925 for a three-night weekend, and £1,235 for a week.

Ceredigion

Cwm Connell Coastal Cottages, Moylegrove



The perfect base for exploring the Pembrokeshire coast

Take a 15-minute stroll through the woods from these cottages and you'll arrive at Ceibwr Bay, a dog-friendly, wild and remote pebble beach, great for porpoise spotting. The beach has a stream which links on to the Pembrokeshire Coastal Path, a 186-mile coastal route stretching from St Dogmaels in the north to Amroth in the south – with plenty of breathtaking scenery to explore on foot with your four-legged friend.

Back at the cottages, dogs

are welcomed at all six properties, sleeping two to six, and they all have enclosed and gated patios, sharing one large garden. There's also a four-acre paddock, where your pet can roam free while you sit on a bench and enjoy the sea views, which are stunning in any weather.

Staying There Bron y Felin (sleeps six) at Cwm Connell Cottages starts from £540 for a three-night weekend, and £650 for a week (cwmconnell.co.uk).



Spoil your pooch at this award-winning haven for hounds

Cornwall

Kernock Cottages, Pillaton

Here, your pampered pooch gets his own doggy welcome pack, complete with treats, poo bags and a toy, plus a holiday dog tag with the cottage's contact details in case he goes astray – no wonder this was the 2017 gold-winner for the South West dog-friendly business of the year!

There are miles of beaches that welcome dogs nearby (Seaton, Downderry and Whitsand) plenty of dog-friendly pubs

– The Springer Spaniel at Treburley even has a treat jar!

Kernock offers doggy daycare and on-site grooming, while all four of their dog-friendly cottages (sleeping two to 10) have enclosed gardens. And there's a large paddock with mown paths, a woodland loop and solar lighting for those late-night strolls.

Staying There Heather (sleeps four) at Kernock Cottages starts from £510 for a three-night weekend stay, and £850 for a week (kernockcottages.com).

Read More
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8.5 million UK Arthritis sufferers could turn back the hands of time with the amazing Collagen Ultra.

by George Brookes

Collagen is the most abundant natural protein in our bodies, making up around 33% of our body mass, and being present in bones, joints, muscle and other types of connective tissue. Scientists believe that for many people, particularly the elderly, its production slows down or stops, with some going as far as saying if you're over 30 your body can't make Collagen anymore, and that means that you have to take it!

Until recently Collagen was best known purely as a treatment for wrinkles, but Professor Greg Whyte, director of research at the British Olympic Medical Unit, says "Collagen is the most common protein in the body. We need it for healthy joints, physical resilience and the ability to recover from injuries. The body loses 1.5 per cent every year. By the age of 40 we have lost 30 per cent."

Supplements perform as well as natural Collagen in helping the body

Recent research by Roland Moskowitz a Professor of Orthopaedics at Case Western University in America, looked at 400 patients with arthritic knees from the US, Britain and Germany. Some were given a placebo, while the others were treated with a Collagen supplement. The latter group showed significant reduction in pain, and an improvement in joint mobility, with 93% achieving positive results some after only two weeks.

As well as helping arthritis sufferers, Collagen also proved its worth after being given to the celebrity climbers who conquered Mount Kilimanjaro for Comic Relief in 2009. The supplements were prescribed



If you thought Collagen was just for wrinkles, think again!

Is YOUR body still making enough Collagen?



for the Kilimanjaro climbers by Olympic medic Professor Whyte to help to keep the team's joints supple and protect their looks from the harsh conditions. Cheryl Cole and DJ Chris Moyles, Gary Barlow, DJ Fearne Cotton and Cole's

Girls Aloud band mate Kimberley Walsh were among the nine stars who managed to scale Africa's highest peak.

At least half of the team were given daily Collagen supplements by Professor Whyte, a leading expert in exercise science and a former silver Olympic medalist. Professor Whyte said: "I believe these supplements played a crucial role in the success of the trip. Collagen has been shown to not only protect the joints but maintain skin tone and looks."

Collagen makes cartilage grow

Most interestingly, as well as helping the existing tissues, Collagen seems able to stimulate the growth of new cartilage, which is borne out by medical studies which say that patients with damaged or arthritic joints showed improvements in mobility and pain relief when

taking the supplement.

Dr Steffen Oesser of Kiel University in Germany has published research that demonstrates that by adding Collagen to cartilage tissue it was possible to encourage extra cells to grow. "This is the first time anyone has demonstrated that Collagen has this effect on cartilage and backs up anecdotal evidence and patient trial" he said.

Collagen Ultra made me able to walk the dog again

Importantly some Collagen supplements are very much better than others. Rose Jackson from Birmingham tells us "I was advised by my Doctor six months ago to take Collagen Ultra supplements to help my very painful joints. 40 years ago in my twenties I had a serious car accident where I damaged my leg, and for the last 15 years this has caused incredible pain in my knee and hips, to the point where some days I was hardly able to walk, even just around the house".

"After just a few weeks of taking Collagen Ultra, this pain was almost gone, and now six months down the line, I am able to go for long walks with my

BY THE AGE OF 40 WE CAN LOSE AROUND 40% OF OUR NATURAL COLLAGEN

dogs with no pain at all. My husband just can't believe it, as he honestly expected that I might be in a wheelchair by now, with him as my carer, and it's all due to Collagen Ultra".

Dr Robert Foster from Boston, USA tells us "Having been a Surgeon for more than 35 years, I have been recommending that my patients take a Collagen supplement after their surgery to greatly speed up their recovery for quite some time, as I believe that it helps to rebuild the cartilage and connective tissue of the joints, and give a number of other significant benefits".

Dr Foster says Collagen Ultra is the best

"When a patient told me about Collagen Ultra I had to investigate further, as it seemed to bring together the correct amount of all of the different types of Collagen, plus a large number of other key active ingredients that I knew would be very beneficial".

"After I had the chance to talk at length to the team of Scientists, Chemists and Doctors that had been involved in formulating this product, and eventually realised that it was true, this was the best available Collagen product by some distance, that I'd ever seen".

"From that point I've made Collagen Ultra a key part of my patient's recovery strategy, even recommending that many avoid having surgery in the first place, and instead start taking the product to see if it can help people avoid going under the knife".

"The results have been astounding with so many positive experiences for numerous different people, which is very gratifying as I'd much rather help the body to heal itself than perform surgery. It's rare in life that you can come across something life-changing, but Collagen Ultra truly is".

Collagen Ultra is only available from Stirling Health: www.collagenultra.com

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SAVE £61.35 Order three month's supply for £64.35 (saving £31.50) and we'll give you three extra week's supply (normal price £29.85) completely free of charge - that's 15 weeks supply for the price of 12!

Call: 0845 450 1471 www.collagenultra.com
Lines open 9am - 5pm, Mon - Sat. 6 days a week FOR ONLINE ORDERS

We normally deliver within 10-14 days, but please allow up to 21 days for delivery during periods where the demand is very high

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Collagen Ultra 2 month supply	SAVE £39.90	£43.90	
Collagen Ultra 3 month supply	SAVE £61.35	£64.35	
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This Week

EMMA MARCHINGTON, a small-animal vet at Brelades Vets in Surrey, is our expert in animal health.



Training Your Puppy

Q Could you give me any advice on toilet training our new puppy?

Be patient, and try to see things from your puppy's point of view. Make it easy for her to get it right, and praise her when she does. Take her outside after food, or when she wakes up from a nap. Learn to recognise the signs, such as walking in tight circles and sniffing the ground, and take her out smartly so she can do it in the right place. Then praise her for getting it right. It can be useful to teach her a command, by saying a suitable word while she's going to the toilet – just choose your word carefully as sooner or later you'll be using it in front of other people!

Q People have told me I need to socialise my puppy, what does that mean?

This is about your puppy learning how to interact with other dogs so he can have fun without being either fearful, or too rough and aggressive. Once he's old enough to go for walks, try to ensure he has lots of pleasant encounters with other dogs. Puppy classes are a good way for him to meet other pups, and you will pick up lots of training tips too.

Puppies always want to play but other dogs may not be in the mood. It is your responsibility to keep him under control until he learns

Be patient with your new puppy



the boundaries. Put him on a lead when you meet another dog, until you can train him to wait until you tell him it's OK to play with them.

Q My spaniel seems scared of the vacuum cleaner, what should I do?

Try to ignore the unwanted behaviour, and take care not to reinforce his fear by vacuuming close to him when he's in his bed, or backing him into a corner. You won't desensitise him, you'll only make things worse. Don't make a fuss either. He needs the freedom to be able to move away to a distance he finds comfortable.

Store the vacuum cleaner in plain view so he can get used to it being around and, if possible, try to do most of your vacuuming when the dog isn't at home. Try to keep sessions short and in another part of the house away from the dog, and build up gradually.

Q My labrador puppy is sometimes reluctant to get in the car, is he car sick?

Many puppies are fine travelling in the car, but some do get car sick. Often they will grow out of it, but others become very

unhappy, drooling and anxious even before you set off.

Try getting the dog used to being in the car without going anywhere, then build up starting with short trips of just a minute or two before letting them out again. If that isn't working, you may want to contact a dog behaviourist for help. Your vet may be able to prescribe medication to help with the occasional long journey, but these drugs aren't suitable for daily use.

Q My terrier whines and barks when I leave her alone, what should I do?

This is called separation anxiety, and it can sometimes become quite extreme, leading to destructive behaviour.

Ideally you would take her for a walk before you leave her, or at least spend a few minutes playing outside, so she's ready to relax and have a nap. Some owners find it helpful to leave the radio on when they go out. You can also vary the amount of time you leave her, sometimes coming back after just a few minutes. If

you've tried these with no improvement, then the next step is to get help from a dog behaviourist. Ask local dog walkers for a personal recommendation, or talk to your vet.



Get help if your dog is anxious

PHOTOS: GETTY IMAGES

Do You Have A Question?

❖ Write to: Expert Q&A, *Woman's Weekly*, 161 Marsh Wall, London E14 9AP or email WomansWeeklyPostbag@timeinc.com
Our experts welcome your letters but they cannot reply to individual questions and will select questions for publication only.

NEXT WEEK
Shopping The Sales

From Darla, With Love

THE STORY SO FAR

Drawn to Porthcawl by a call from an elderly woman called **SIÂN, ROBYN** is both captivated and shocked to learn about her great-grandmother, **DARLA**. Bitterly, Siân tells Robyn that Darla was a great beauty but selfish, and that Robyn has inherited her looks. Finally alone on the beach, Robyn is overcome with emotion and vows to discover more about Darla. In 1940, stricken by grief at losing her beloved father, Darla gives birth to a baby girl called Gwen, but immediately struggles to bond with the child. Unable to cope with her loss and often putting herself at great risk, Darla escapes to the beach whenever she can, including during night-time air raids. When her husband, **DAI**, eventually returns home on leave, Darla slips out in the dark, leaving everyone else asleep, and walks into the sea. Without a moment to spare, she is rescued from drowning by the local policeman.

The story now continues

*Robyn
July 2017,
London*

For the first time in a long time, the early-morning air was cool and refreshing. Robyn rolled over in bed, and pulled herself up against the pillows. Tomorrow would be the start of the last week at school before the long summer holidays began. It was a little pathetic, but she was anxious about going back in, even if it was only for five days. She'd been away for a fortnight, hardly long in the big scheme of things, but she felt strangely disengaged from the person she'd been before; as though the teacher she'd been then was

nothing like the one she'd be now; as though she – the real Robyn Merrow – had suddenly and painfully revealed herself to the world. It was hard to explain but Robyn just wasn't Robyn any more. She wasn't just a Londoner now, she'd become a muddle of Welsh and Italian too. It was as though the pain and problems of the past had come crashing down through the generations to rest upon her unsuspecting shoulders. She'd had no choice in the matter and there was no defence against the shockwaves rippling out from her relatives. Their emotions were now hers. Her life before, with the benefit of hindsight, had been blissfully uncomplicated. But that life was gone. There could be no return to the days before Porthcawl and Darla Lombardi. No return to the Robyn she had been.

The bed beside her was empty but Simon was still in the flat, she could hear him in the kitchen, china clinking, the toaster popping up. Pulling on a long grey T-shirt, she climbed out of bed and walked towards the noises. He stood, bare-chested and clean from a shower, peering into the fridge, his hair spiky with water and his chin still stubbly. He'd clearly already had his morning run. Without telling her. Without her even waking. A twinge of sadness caught her by surprise. It was ironic that so much had changed in her life during the last two weeks, yet here, with Simon, nothing had shifted at all – they were still dancing around one another, still drifting apart. And there were still moments,

plenty of them, when she loved him desperately and couldn't imagine a life without him. But the problem was, she couldn't be sure he felt the same. Not any more.

'What've you lost?' she asked.

He looked up, surprised to see her. 'Nothing, just miles away.' He pulled out the butter and let the fridge door swing shut. 'I was bringing you tea and toast.'

'In bed?' she asked.

Simon pulled a face. 'Yeah. I thought you might be tired. But now you're up, I guess not.'

They were the very words she should have spoken weeks ago. Or maybe, it was months. They were short and neat, and cut straight to the chase. And she didn't have a clue how to reply. She swallowed hard and tried to meet his gaze.

'Why don't we laugh any more?' he asked, his eyes searching hers. 'Why have you bailed out of "us"?''

Robyn opened her mouth to speak but there were no words. It was true, they hadn't laughed for months, not properly. But

'What happened to us, Robyn? When did we lose our way'

She walked over to him, slipping her arms around his waist and placing the side of her face against his chest. His skin was warm and smelled of shower gel. She inhaled deeply. This was where she always wanted to be, wasn't it? Right here. Safe in his arms. Well, with hers around him, at least. She looked up at him and smiled. 'Let's take it back to bed anyway, shall we?'

He made another face, and pulled away from her. 'I can't get back into bed now,' he said, his back turned to her as he undid the butter and began scraping it across the toast. 'I'm up and showered.'

'Right,' Robyn said. She stepped away too. 'I'll just take my toast and go then, shall I?'

When he turned around, her stomach knotted. His eyes were filled with tears. He passed the plate to her. 'What happened to us, Robyn?' he asked. 'When did we lose our way?'

the bailing out bit, that wasn't right. She wasn't her mother; backing off when a relationship got too serious. She wasn't Carys. She wasn't Gwen. And she wasn't Darla. She wasn't. If anyone had consciously done the bailing, it had been him.

'I don't know what you want from me any more,' Simon continued, wiping his face. 'But I guess as you're going back to Wales for the summer, we'll soon find out.'

He waited for her to speak, but she didn't. She couldn't. Her mind looped from Darla to Gwen to Carys, and then back again. Again and again, each one in their own way, pushing away those closest. Rejecting affection. Selfishly. Painfully. And why? Because they were terrified of being destroyed by it? Or because they were incapable of loving back? So, where did that leave her? Was she, after everything was said and done, simply her mother's daughter,



*Tonight, of all nights,
was when her life would
change forever*

a product of generations of broken hearts?

By the time her head cleared enough for words to form on her lips, Simon had left the kitchen. And then the flat. The front door slammed, leaving Robyn in silence.

Darla July 1950, Porthcawl

The beach at Sandy Bay looked beautiful, the tide so far out that the huge stretch of rippled, wet sand left behind was virtually all she could see, glittering and shining in the warm sunshine. Darla had taken root on a dune at the back of the beach, watching the children, the noisy funfair behind her. She couldn't see the promenade from where she sat, or the cafe. Not for the first time it struck her as

disconcerting that Porthcawl looked so different from this bay. Busier. Louder. Less rugged. Less like home, and much more like a holiday destination. Gwen's squeals of delight cut through the general hubbub, and Darla couldn't help but smile. Turning ten years old was an important milestone, and Dai had spent nearly an hour guiding her and two friends up and down the beach on a donkey.

'Which one is yours?'

Darla turned to the man who spoke. He was Italian, she knew that much from his accent and his features. But she didn't recognise him.

'The one on the brown donkey,' she replied, turning briefly to glance again at Gwen.

The man smiled. 'She looks like she's having fun.'

Darla nodded. 'It's her birthday.'

The man nodded too, and perched beside her. It was a subtly intimate gesture, given that they were total strangers and that he now sat staring into her face. Her pulse quickened. Not in fear, she realised with surprise. She pulled away a little. Her cheeks flushed. 'I'm sorry,' she said. 'Have we met?'

'No,' he replied, holding out a hand. 'I'm Marco Tucci.'

'Darla Evans,' she said. She took his hand, not because she wanted to, but because it seemed rude not to. It was strong and warm, flexing around hers.

Marco raised his eyebrows. 'But you're not Welsh?'

'My mother is,' she replied, taken aback by his boldness.

'And your father?'

Darla removed her hand from his grasp. Whatever she had felt when he first sat beside her was fused now with anger.

She flashed her eyes at him, and stood up, smoothing down her skirt. 'My father is none of your business, Mr Tucci,' she said, turning to walk away.

He stood too, awkwardly, his face serious and concerned. 'I apologise,' he said, 'that was somewhat clumsy of me.' He hesitated, and then cleared his throat. 'In fact, I've already heard that your father was called Tommaso Lombardi. I'm so sorry that he passed away, especially in such tragic circumstances.'

Darla glared at him. 'Did you know him?'

Marco Tucci shook his head. 'Then I would kindly ask you to not speak of him. You can have no idea how tragic the circumstances were.'

The man blew out his cheeks and looked hard at her. 'Actually,
Continued overleaf

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I can. I too was interned.'

Darla's heart pounded. She'd always known that men of all ages were taken to the camps, but she'd never met a relatively young internee before. 'Where?' she asked.

'I was much luckier than your father. I'd been in Cardiff only a few months when I was shipped to the Isle of Man. It wasn't so bad. In fact, people were very kind to us. I wish Tommaso could have been there too. I'd have liked to have met him.'

Darla swallowed. This man needed to stop talking about her father. She raised her hand to her eyes again, hoping it hid the tears. 'I haven't seen you here before.'

He shrugged. 'No. I grew tired of Cardiff. I'm new to Porthcawl. I don't know many other Italians here. I was hoping you and I might become friends.'

'Why?'

'Because, like I said, I don't know many people here.'

'It's a big town. I'm sure you'll find plenty of people to befriend.'

He shook his head slightly. 'There can be no-one else as beautiful as you.'

His confidence astounded her. Much to her annoyance, Darla's cheeks burned crimson. 'I have all the friends I need, Mr Tucci. Besides,' she added, beginning to walk away, 'I'm a married woman.'

'I know,' he said, his eyes following her. 'But you didn't say happily.'

They both stared down the beach. Darla marched away as quickly as she could through the thick, hot sand, the tears spilling on to her cheeks, and Marco watched her go. And they both saw Dai, one hand casually holding the bridle of the donkey, the other handing back a beach ball to a beautiful blonde woman, his handsome face split into a wide smile. He looked totally transfixed.

Darla October 1959, Porthcawl

The exceptionally good weather had finally broken, huge scudding



clouds blackening the sky, sending rods of cold, hard rain hammering against the windows. It was barely five o'clock in the afternoon, but was as dark as midnight. Darla turned the cafe sign to *closed* and bolted the door. Pressing her fingertip to the damp glass, she cleared a small circle in the condensation and peered through it, towards the promenade and the sea wall beyond. It was virtually

No-one in Porthcawl needed her any more, not really...

impossible to see anything. Her heart skidded. This was the last time she'd turn the sign; the last time she'd lock up; the last time she'd sweep the floor. She glanced at the huge wall clock above the cake display, and then back out to the weather-beaten street. Tonight, of all nights, was when her life would change forever. She had decided the date months ago. No-one in Porthcawl needed her any more, not really. She had a marriage in name only; a daughter who, at 19, was engaged and pregnant; and a mother who was long remarried and moved out from the flat above the shop. There was nothing to stay for. Morwen, her only friend, would perhaps miss her, but the others would cope. Dai would blame her, and then forget her, and quickly take up with another of his blondes. And Gwen, more scratchy and distant than she'd ever been, would soon have a husband of her own, followed by a baby.

Darla, with the passage of time, had become obsolete. And she'd known for months that the time had come to leave, that her life in Porthcawl was finally over. Her departure had simply been a question of when, not if. And, if she were honest, it had been that way since her father's death.

At precisely six o'clock, she set Dai's supper down in front of him and announced she was going downstairs to bake for the next day. He barely glanced up from the evening newspaper as she left the room. She didn't look back. What would have been the point? The time for changing her mind had long since passed. The only urge she fought was with Gwen. The girl had her bedroom door shut, the sounds of Buddy Holly seeping out from her record player. Leaning her head briefly against the doorframe, Darla closed her eyes. There were only two things in her life that she truly regretted: losing her father, and failing Gwen. But there could be no turning back time, no making them both right. What was done,

was done. And the two were so inextricably linked that no sense could be made of either without the other. It was, quite simply, time to let go of the past.

The force of the rain took her by surprise. She stood on the promenade, her face turned up to the black sky, cold water pummeling against her cheeks. She looked back at the cafe – the lights shining out upstairs, awning tightly rolled back, the window still full of chocolate and cigarette boxes and signs promising the best ice cream and lemonade in Porthcawl. Would her father have been proud of his business had he survived? They'd done their best. The war had changed everything, but they'd kept going. Darla turned back to the sea. It was impossible to see where the swirling water began and the rocks ended. But the sound of its angry fury filled her ears, and drew her closer. This was it. It was time for the final goodbye.

Robyn August 2017, Cardiff

They opened the old French windows in the dining room and placed a chair just inside for Gwen. In the first few days of being home, it became her favourite spot. Initially, she'd resisted turning it into her temporary bedroom but it was obvious she was unable to climb the stairs. Besides, the room was never used and had the best view of the garden. A neighbour helped Robyn bring a bed and chest of drawers down, and they made the best of it.

Robyn sat beside Gwen's chair. It was unnerving how quickly they'd settled into a daily routine, as if living together was second nature; which it wasn't. Living with anyone, Robyn had come to believe, didn't sit easily with her. First, her mum. And now, Simon. If she really had been subconsciously pulling away from him, she had decided to stop. Being here with Gwen for the summer was a good thing. It gave her and Simon space. And at least they were talking again, even if it was only by phone or Skype.

'I'm going to make a coffee,' Robyn said, standing up. 'Do you want one?'

Gwen pulled a face. 'When I'm up and about, I'll show you how to do it properly. You've got no idea what good coffee tastes like.'

Robyn smiled. 'It's in our genes, I thought.'

Gwen's eyes darkened. 'I told you. I don't want to talk about her. It's none of your business.'

'That's hardly fair. She was my great grandmother.'

'You can't just come in and take over, Robyn.'

'I'm not trying to. I'm just fascinated by her.'

Gwen let out a moan, like a pained dog. 'She wasn't fascinating. She was selfish. She always did exactly what she wanted and got her own way. Her whole life was about pleasing herself. She never gave my dad or me a second thought.'

Continued overleaf

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'Then tell me about her.'
'I DON'T WANT TO.'

Robyn recoiled. Gwen's face was red, her mouth sneering, her eyes wide. She knew her grandmother had a quick temper, she'd been told many times by her own mother, Carys, but until this point, Robyn hadn't seen it for herself. 'OK,' Robyn said, holding her hands up in mock surrender as she backed out of the room. 'Have it your way.'

In the cool kitchen, Robyn flicked the kettle on, pleased with the instant noise it made as it boiled the water. She needed to calm down and to think. From the day she went to Porthcawl and met Siân Roberts, she'd been trying to engage Gwen in a conversation about Darla Lombardi. On every occasion, Gwen had been stony and silent in response, sometimes even walking away. But there had been nothing like the sudden ferocity she'd just exhibited. Like it or not, which Gwen clearly didn't, Darla was related to Robyn. The only living person who could fill in the gaps was Gwen herself. How could she hold back from

dining room and Robyn jumped. Gwen. Running, she reached the doorway in seconds. Her grandmother stood, shaking, a drawer from the dresser at her feet.

'TAKE THESE,' she screamed, hurling a package at Robyn. 'If you want to know more about my self-centred mother, get reading.'

Inside the packet, Robyn saw scores of envelopes and postcards. She pulled out the nearest one. It was addressed to Gwen, but had never been opened. Never read. But cherished enough to have been kept. She studied the stamps and postmark. Italian. 1963.

'Who's it from?' Robyn asked, staring at Gwen.

'She waited six whole months before she wrote the first time. Can you believe that? I thought she was dead. What kind of a woman lets her child think she's drowned?'

Gwen's eyes glinted with tears. Anger or sadness, Robyn couldn't tell. She looked down again, turning the envelope over in her hand. On the reverse, in neat italics was a return address in a place

'If you want to know more about my self-centred mother, get reading'

talking about her mother? Even if it was only to criticise the woman? Even if it was only to rage about her disappearance? The kettle clicked off, but Robyn didn't move. All Siân had said was that Darla vanished one wet, dark October night, never to be seen again. Her account was couched in bitterness, yet Robyn felt immense sympathy for Darla. It was highly likely she'd been suffering from depression, Robyn thought. Losing a father and then giving birth in quick succession would, these days, be treated with empathy and support. Everyone assumed that Darla had walked into the sea and drowned, her body taken out to sea. Apparently, she'd tried before and a local policeman had saved her. It seemed - it was - so heartbreakingly sad.

Something crashed in the

called Bardi, Northern Italy. It all seemed incredible.

'So, Darla went to Italy? She didn't die?'

'Precisely. The woman you find so fascinating left her family in the dead of night and ran away.'

'But why?'

Gwen's voice was quieter now. 'Because she loved him more than us.' She slumped back to her chair, the fight in her extinguished.

Robyn took hold of her grandmother's quivering hand. 'I don't understand. And why tell me today?' she asked, gently stroking the papery skin.

Gwen exhaled loudly, and sniffed. 'Because today was her birthday. Wherever she is, or was, today is my mother's 98th birthday.'

CONCLUDES NEXT WEEK
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CUT OUT AND KEEP

Answers to 14 November Puzzles

JUMBO CROSSWORD Across 4 Cab. 8 Air. 13 Unequal. 14 Unwraps. 15 Octagon. 16 Crew. 17 Ashley. 18 Blank. 19 Décor. 21 Spectre. 22 Ear lobe. 24 Eclipse. 26 Fuming. 28 Pendant. 30 Critical. 35 Las. 36 Boudoir. 38 Males. 39 Lunar. 40 Yelp. 41 Independently. 43 Lena. 47 Dumbo. 48 Regal. 49 Artiste. 50 Vic. 51 Penelope. 52 Fertile. 54 Ransom. 57 Overdue. 60 Admiral. 62 Initial. 64 Motel. 66 Tread. 67 Flinch. 68 Plus. 70 Natasha. 71 Tornado. 72 Intense. 73 Sly. 74 Pet. Down 1 Successful. 2 Severe. 3 Sun. 4 Cluster. 5 Bullseye. 6 Sway. 7 Bamboo. 8 Ashamed. 9 Rookie. 10 Stud. 11 Eggcup. 12 Snorkeller. 20 Stand by. 23 Ruder. 25 Little 27 Muscleman. 29 Nomad. 31 Restless. 32 Conceives. 33 Runner-up. 34 Planet. 37 On edge. 42 Ellie. 44 Accomplished. 45 Fouled. 46 Melania. 47 Deployment. 49 Altar. 53 Lollipop. 55 Majesty. 56 Biscuit. 58 Estate. 59 Extras. 61 Modern. 63 In-line. 65 Lost. 67 Flag. 69 ATM. Answer: Peppermint.

LINKWORDS SOLUTION Making. Pastry. Rental. Trying. Tongue. Cookie. Sponge. Purple. Friend. Recipe. Answer: Lemongrass.

WORDWISE SOLUTION Aged. Agent. Aglet. Ague. Angel. Angle. Angled. Dangle. Degu. Dung. Egad. Gale. Gannet. Gant. Gate. Gated. Gaunt. Gean. Geld. Gent. Glad. Glade. Gland. Glean. Glen. Glue. Glued. Glut. Gluten. Gnat. Gunned. Lang. Luge. Lung. Lunge. Lunged. Nudge. Tang. Tangle. Tangled. Untangle. Answer: Untangled.

WORDWISE SOLUTION Cede. Centred. Code. Coned. Conned. Contend. Cord. Cored. Credo. Creed. Decent. Décor. Deer. Dene. Denote. Dent. Dern. Deter. Dored. Done. Dote. Drone. Encode. Erode. Need. Nerd. Node. Noted. Redo. Redone. Reed. Rend. Rented. Rode. Rodent. Teed. Tend. Tender. Tendon. Toed. Toned. Trend. Trod. Answer: Contender.

SUDOKU

3	5	4	1	7	2	9	6	8
7	2	8	6	9	4	5	3	1
1	6	9	8	5	3	7	4	2
6	8	3	5	1	9	4	2	7
4	7	5	2	3	8	1	9	6
2	9	1	4	6	7	3	8	5
9	3	6	7	8	1	2	5	4
8	1	2	9	4	5	6	7	3
5	4	7	3	2	6	8	1	9

CODEWORD

S	C	E	P	T	I	C	M	E	A	D	O	W
O	X	H	O	S	J	E	E	I				
O	U	T	E	R	B	U	T	T	E	R		
T	O	U	R	U	C	E	E					
H	A	L	L	S	T	A	N	D	T	R	I	O
S	C	R	A	T	E	T	I	B				
A	C	Q	U	I	T							
Y	U	N	S	T	V	U	A					
E	L	O	N	G	A	T	E					
R	T											
C	A	R	P									
Z	T	H	L	A	A	G	U					
E	D	I	T	O	R	I	A					
A	O	N	T	E	L	O	R					
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Puzzle Time

Answers for 14 November puzzles are on page 59. The answers to all this week's puzzles will appear in two issues' time

Wordwise

You have 15 minutes to find as many words as possible using the letters shown in the grid. Each word must contain four or more letters, one of which must be the central square. No letter can be used more than once in each word. No proper nouns, plurals or foreign words are allowed. There is one nine-letter word in the grid, for which this week's clue is: *Detestable, loathsome.*

RET
ABO
RHN

WORD COUNT
37 = Good
More than 45 = Well done!

You can work it out...

Sudoku

To solve this puzzle, fill in the grid so that each 3 x 3 box, each row and each column contains the numbers 1-9.

	1							3		
								8 9		
								2 6 4		
	2									
8		6	5							
4		5	3	1						
5	6		2	7						
	9	2					3			7
		3	1	4						

You can work it out...

Codeword

A codeword is like a crossword puzzle but there are no clues!

Every letter of the alphabet has been replaced by a number, the same number representing the same letter throughout the puzzle. Just decide which letter is represented by which number! To start you off, we've revealed the codes for three letters. When you've filled in these letters on the grid, you'll have enough information to guess words and discover other letters. Use the letter checklist and letter grid to keep track of the letters you have found.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
		D										A
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
		H										

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

24	21	12	1	13	6		21	20	24	18	12	15	3	
15		26		5		13		21		8		9		5
15	25	15	19	16	13	3	21	14		11	13	17	13	24
14		19		18		16		15		24		23		26
13	26	19	17	15	23	15		23	16	26	20	13	23	20
25		14		10		19				9				20
	21	21	2	15		18	17	15	6		16	18	3	15
20		23		3		10		7		11		8		3
23	13	4	15		6	15	8	26		21	13	17	16	
26				1				18		24		15		19
19	7	26	15	15	2	15		22	18	24	12	23	18	6
7		8		19		10		22		18		24		26
26	8	24	18	17		21	10	15	23	5	23	21	14	3
15		15		15		4		3		24		5		12
	19	17	13	23	10	15	3		16	15	5	4	24	15

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Jumbo Puzzle

JUST FOR FUN!

Simply fill in the crossword (right) and read down the letters in the shaded squares to reveal a medicinal tincture to alleviate a sore throat (5,5).

Across

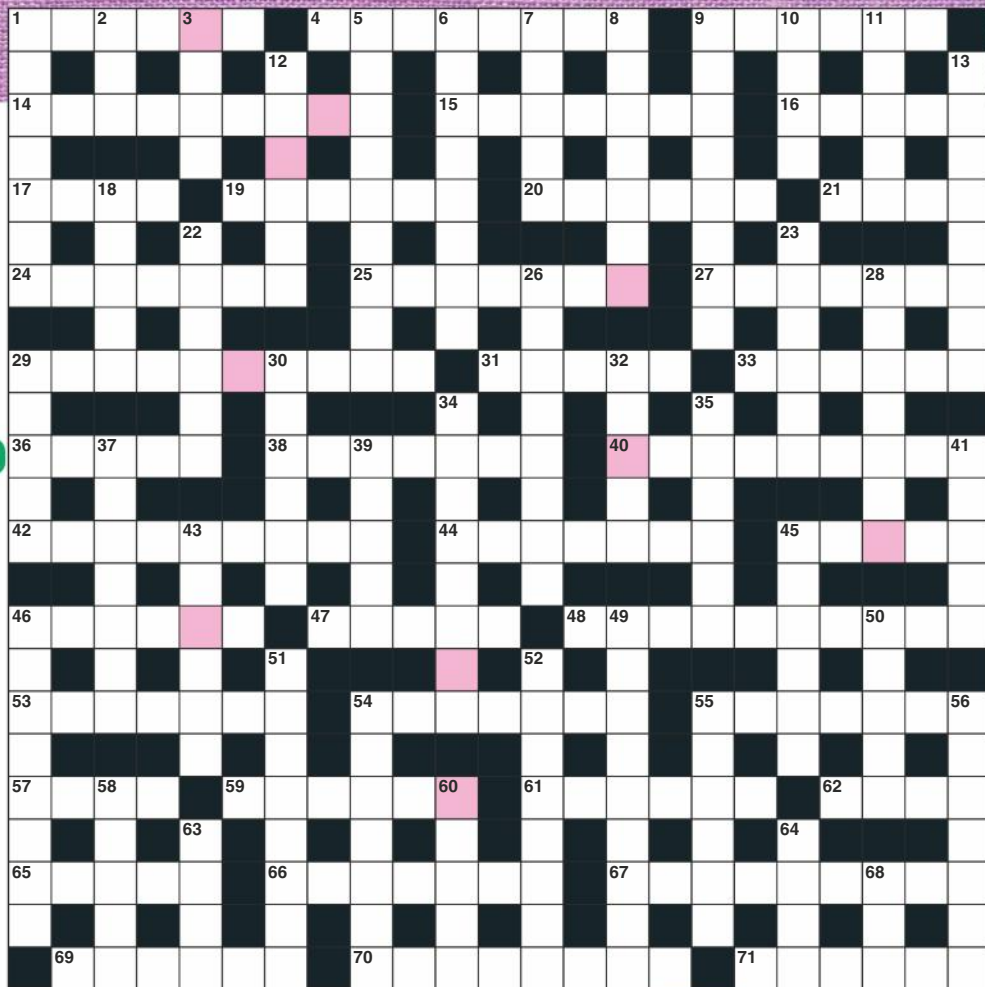
- 1 Lure with charm (6)
- 4 Keeps in quarantine (8)
- 9 Dodgy, devious-looking (6)
- 14 ___ fan, device used to remove kitchen fumes (9)
- 15 Worried or worrying (7)
- 16 Arboreal primate (5)
- 17 Swiss mountain range (4)
- 19 Mischa ____, star of *The OC* (6)
- 20 Carver's tool (6)
- 21 Pork joint (4)
- 24 Surgical addition (7)
- 25 Sarah ____, Girls Aloud singer (7)
- 27 Ungoverned, unruly (7)
- 29 Richest (10)
- 31 Arrange in loose folds (5)
- 33 Native of England, Wales or Scotland (6)
- 36 Child's furry toy (5)
- 38 Astonishing or impressive (7)
- 40 ___ and Bristol fashion, neat and tidy (9)
- 42 Building, edifice (9)
- 44 Immense inland area of Australia (7)
- 45 More timid (5)
- 46 Not certain (6)
- 47 Cow's milk gland (5)
- 48 Transparent (garment) (3-7)
- 53 Copy the behaviour of (7)
- 54 People in a club (7)
- 55 Cuddly, cute (7)
- 57 Per item (4)
- 59 Fast run of a horse (6)
- 61 Bodies of water (6)
- 62 Cold-shoulder, ignore (4)
- 65 Land along the edge of the sea (5)
- 66 Grappled, fought (7)
- 67 Refurbishes (9)
- 69 Bellowed like a lion (6)
- 70 Tiresome and irritating (8)

71 In the forefront of fashion (6)

Down

- 1 Gwen ____, No Doubt singer (7)
- 2 Speck (3)
- 3 Scottish family group (4)
- 5 Elongates, extends (9)
- 6 Pupils, apprentices (8)
- 7 Very harmful, poisonous (5)
- 8 Pushing, jostling (7)
- 9 In the manner of a female sibling (8)
- 10 ___ Fisher, Aussie actress (4)
- 11 Musical term for speed and rhythm (5)
- 12 ___ Little, 1999 film (6)
- 13 Younger male relative (8)
- 18 Duchess of Cambridge's sister, informally (5)
- 22 To some extent (6)
- 23 *Snow White and the Seven ___*, film (6)
- 26 Supply water to (land or crops) (8)
- 28 Point where sea meets river (7)
- 29 Naomi ____, actress (5)
- 30 Figure of Greek myth who flew too close to the Sun (6)
- 32 Popular Italian food (5)
- 34 Material used as floor covering (8)
- 35 Cricket stumps (6)
- 37 Portia ____, wife of Ellen DeGeneres (2,5)
- 39 At the front (5)

- 41 Soil (5)
- 43 Cornflakes, eg (6)
- 45 Make a great effort (6)
- 46 All galaxies and all space (8)
- 49 *Lego House* singer (2,7)
- 50 Belonging to a city (5)
- 51 Poured into another container (8)
- 52 Also, as well as the first thing (8)
- 54 ___ McCarthy, star of the 2016 film *Ghostbusters* (7)
- 55 Jacket's inner material (6)
- 56 Official overseas mission handling foreign affairs (7)
- 58 Kaley ____, Penny in *The Big Bang Theory* (5)
- 60 Power cable tower (5)
- 63 Grizzly or polar animal (4)
- 64 At any time (4)
- 68 Metal can (3)



Wordwise

You have 15 minutes to find as many words as possible using the letters shown in the grid. Each word must contain four or more letters, one of which must be the central square. No letter can be used more than once in each word. No proper nouns, plurals or foreign words are allowed. There is one nine-letter word in the grid, for which this week's clue is: **Great, importance.**

D U E
M G A
N T I

WORD COUNT
30 = Good.
More than
38 = Well done!

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A Bit Of A Do

The annual party isn't going as well as one might like

The charity shop Christmas party is not going with anything that could remotely be described as a swing.

'Well, I'm enjoying myself,' says Wendy, lying through her teeth. 'It's nice that we can all get together socially once in a while.'

We all nod and smile and say, 'Mmm', but without any real conviction. The problem is that we all get on so well in the shop. There is no gossip to pass on at our party, because we've already gnawed it to the bone at work. So we are reduced to polite conversation. And, as any grown-up will know from bitter experience, there is nothing less exciting than polite conversation.

It doesn't help that everybody around us is obviously having a whale of a time. (Are whales really known for their party spirit? As the highlight of a whale's day seems to be slapping the water with its tail fin and creating a bit of a splash, I suppose a couple of drinks and a sausage on a stick must sound rather attractive.)

Let me set the scene. We are in one of those pubs that does a good line in food. Because it's nearly Christmas, the place is heaving. A couple of tables away, I can see friends from the cricket club. They are wearing party hats and tinsel, and the waiter – who was also given a party hat – is beginning to look worn down by the sheer amount of jollity and good cheer.

On the table by the window, and surrounded by many waiters, is a party of young women all dressed as Santa, assuming that Santa takes a size eight and favours blonde highlights in his hair.

'I hear you've been going to the gym, Rosemary,' Mrs Beasley pipes up from the end of the table. 'How's that going? Have you managed to lose any weight?'

Well, that might have been phrased a little more sensitively. Suddenly my beef Wellington with all the trimmings doesn't seem quite such a good idea.

'I've been going for about a month now. Three times a week. Well, three times a week twice, and twice a week twice, and for two weeks we decided to have a week off because rest is as important as exercise.' 'And have you lost any weight?' says

Wendy. (I refer you to the sentence above: 'phrased' and 'a little more sensitively'.)

By the window, the young-lady Santas are singing *Jingle Bells*. One of them is standing on her chair, and I can't help noticing that her red skirt is rather on the short side. If Santa really dresses like that to do his rounds on Christmas Eve, it's a wonder he doesn't get chilblains.

'Perhaps,' says Ben, who is one of the younger members of our team and a gentleman to boot, 'it's not the sort of thing Rosie wants to announce in public.'

'Nonsense,' says Wendy. 'I never knew you were so old-fashioned, Ben dear. It's years since a woman's weight was a dark secret that was known only to herself and her bathroom scales.'

'If you must know,' I explain, 'and there's no reason why you should, I have actually put on weight.'

There is a short silence as everybody round the table digests this important news. I – in for a penny, in for a few more pounds – set about the beef Wellington with a bit more enthusiasm.

The waiter is beginning to look worn down by the jollity and cheer

It is perfectly normal, I explain, for people to put on a bit of weight when they start doing exercise for the first time. Our trainer was very reassuring, and says it will soon start to fall off.

'It won't start falling off if you keep shovelling away meals like that,' says Wendy. 'Shouldn't you be eating salad, or something?'

She is, of course, perfectly right, but I have a weakness for beef Wellington. And I was just about to explain, at some length, the merits of beef Wellington when the other young member of our team, Clare, suddenly says, 'Oh! My! God!'

As anybody who has ever met a young person will know, this is an indication that something VERY SERIOUS INDEED has happened – such as receiving an unexpected picture of somebody's lunch, or the news that another young person has posted an amusing message on



Facebook, or Snapchat, or one of those other mobile phone things that nobody over 40 has ever heard of.

'Look!' she says in a stage whisper. 'Look who's just come in.'

'Who is it?' says Mrs B. 'I can't see. One of those noisy Father Christmas girls is in the way.'

'It's Alan,' says Clare.

For the benefit of new readers, Alan is currently the pantomime villain of this page (oh, yes he is). He is the manager of a new charity shop that has opened just down the road, and he and Mrs Beasley seemed to have a bit of a thing going on. Unfortunately, he also seemed to be having a bit of a thing with a lady called Beverley.

'Oh yes, I can see now,' says Mrs B. 'Who on earth is that woman he's with?' 'That woman,' says Clare in a slightly coldish tone, 'is my mother.'

Sorry, new readers, but I forgot to mention that, as well as Mrs B and the lady called Beverley, and probably a list of other women as long as your arm, we suspect that Alan might also be having a bit of a thing with Clare's mother, who is an old friend.

Mrs Beasley's eyes narrow noticeably. 'He told me he was going out with an old friend,' she says.

'They are old friends,' says Clare.

'I didn't think he meant that sort of old friend,' says Mrs B.

Suddenly, our party seems to have got a bit more lively.

Rosie



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